Omar Appears in Jerusalem

عمر يظهر في القدس

BY
NAJEEB AL-KELANI



DAR IBN HAZM



Dr. Najeeb Kelani:

- Born in Egypt, 1931.
- A member of the Authors' Association (Egypt), and the International League on Islamic Literature.
- Winner of the Short Story Price, and The Price of The Higher Council of Arts and Literature in Egypt.
- Author of many Islamic Novels, as an examplar of Islamic literature, of which: The Nights Of Turkistan, Giants Of The North, Virgin Of Jakarta, Omar Appears In Jerusalem, A Journey To God.
- One of the Pioneers and advocates of Islamic Literature.
- Some of his writings has been translated to languages other than Arabic.

Omar Appears
in
Jerusalem



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH
THE MERCIFUL THE COMPASSIONATE

دار ابن حزم
للطباعة والنشر والتوزيع
بيروت - ص. ب: ١٤/٦٣٦٦

Published by: Ibn Hazm Publishing House
P.O. Box 14-6366; Beirut, Lebanon.

First edition
1410 - 1989

Omar Appears in Jerusalem

عمر يظهر في القدس

BY

NAJEEB AL-KELANI

Translated by
The Translation Department
at Ibn Hazm Pub. House.

DAR IBN HAZM

INDEX

A BRIEF WORD

Dear Reader;

I know that this novel may cause a number of artistic, intellectual and ideological wonderings because of its strange idea and originality. But the nightmare that is hanging over the soul of the nation, and the overwhelming pain that is shaking its visions and dreams; and the perplexity that is controlling the minds of its people, all these things poured forth different sources; and it paved the way to a number of visions, some of which are confused and false, and some are proper, rich in productivity, life and strength. There are intellectual and emotional issues; and there are many unexplained matters filling our heads, and haunting us day and night. It's inevitable for the free pens to plunge in the many experiments; for life is a number of experiences to put down whatever they like: seriously, deeply and clearly.

Besides, the content has the greatest effect for the choice of the artistic form; and furthermore, the content may impose a certain form by itself.

With my regards.

Najeeb Al-Kelani
5 June 1970

Chapter 1

"I've told you thousands of times, mother, there's no reason to worry. In fact, I'm feeling there's a heavy sadness filling my heart and a vehement bitterness saturating my soul. I'm feeling desparate from time to time; but in spite of all this, there's no need to worry, mother, we've become used to all these things and it's natural to feel like this, for we're a lost and sad generation. The days (years) of humiliation breed suffering and sadness; and the long years of negligibleness haven't led to the break out of a dawn which would eliminate darkness and gloom. The enemy is so brutal, wicked and vain, and we can't do anything to revenge; and this leaves me totally impotent destroying my dreams. These manifestations are inevitable, and if we weren't appropriated in this way, we would have been like the dead. We're living to see what's happening, to absorb these events, and to get affected by them, and pain disturbs us and thus we're restless and we suffer; we're separated and dream everyday. We are human beings; the ones who don't feel like this and suffer, are abnormal and those are the ones whom you should worry about. You say despair is a blasphemy, and God's mercy reaches everything; you're right, but there's some kind of despair that is imposed on us and we can't fight it back. It's our destiny, and at the same time it's our own punishment. Because of our foolishness and trifleness and carelessness we're beaten. Can this tragedy be a purgatory where we wash our sins and old fornication? Mom, please don't be sad, for the old and long grief will break away, and from this dust and smoke and clouds will appear a giant who'll be able to save us." And I

stopped talking; mother was looking at me, her face sad and pale, and tears were glistening in her eyes. Maybe she was thinking that I was afflicted by a certain vicious kind of madness; and the strangest kind of madness comes from a hallucination which we call sound rationality and logic; and an interesting explanation of the great events that were shaking our existence she didn't do more than advise me to sleep more, and stop reading for some time, and search for some kind of a job to burry my bitterness and grief. Before leaving her, she said: "I don't know till when you'll stay unmarried." Maybe she believed that being committed to a wife and begetting a number of children would offer a new replacement for my spiritual and intellectual interests. Or maybe she was worried about her niece's future with whom she had an unwritten agreement that she was mine and I was hers. Or she wanted someone to be in the place of my brothers and father who were killed in the battle of Jerusalem, one of those black days in June. I answered her tensely: "Mom, there would be no taste for weddings while the flags of the enemy are hovering in the sky of our sacred city." I ran away out of the city; I didn't carry any bag, or wear any black glasses, or turn right and left. I was just walking carelessly, my absent looks directed forward far away. I walked, and the side of the road was on my right. The city was noisy with the sounds of cars, planes, and calls of the sellers, till I reached my usual place, the place of quietness, solitude, silence and vast horizons. I sat under an old tree to which I always felt some strange kind of closeness and longing, leaning my back and head against its huge, steady stem, and tens of (many) thoughts struggling in my fatigued head. The land features hadn't changed: the sky was the same, the birds flying past in the endless horizon, the sun pouring its warmth and rays, not caring for what had happened and what was happening; and the view of the world was confusing: it was clapping for the conquerors and blaming the overcome, ill-treated people, and at the same time this same world was calling for righteousness, justice and peace. I could almost suffocate or burst out, my eyelids getting heavier and exhaustion was making me unable to move. Everything was confusing in my mind

as if I were tied down and suspended between the earth and heaven, unable to move up or down. Were the natural laws vanished or was I walking in another mysterious world? Then I heard a voice calling: "You, the one who is in between death and life, come to me." And a fresh sweet-smelling breath touched my flamed and flushed face. I felt as if a magical hand pouring in my heart and mind bits of comfort, peace and contentment. I tried to open my eyes, and a heavenly light flowed in; oh God, what was happening? I started to touch my body, open and close my eyes, close and open my hands, and breathe with force. I felt a tender hand patting on my shoulder gently and kindly. I was shaken and quickly I stood up terrified. I looked behind me and I saw a tall man having a radiant fully red-colored face which added to his appearance more respect. The most wonderful thing in him was his wide, pure eyes which were full of honesty, faith and peace.

"May God greet you."

I cried out confused: "who are you?"

He answered smiling: "You must greet me as I do."

I said breathlessly: "And peace is on you, so who are you?"

"One of the creatures of God."

"You haven't answered me yet."

"It's the first truth that we are all the slaves of God."

"But for every creature, there's a name and features."

He answered bowing his head humbly: "My name is Omar Ben Al-Khattab."

I shouted astonished: "Who are you?"

"What's bothering you my son?"

"I thought you were the God's Messenger's Caliph."

"It is so."

The words coming from his lips, strong, firm, full of truth and sublimity, devoid from doubt and lies; but how could I believe it? "Death is a horrible cage; we haven't heard before that anyone had crossed its thick bars or climbed over its height."

He smiled calmly and said: "Death is a bridge to immortality. Do you know something about God, resurrection,

God's ability, and the invisible and testimonial world?"

"I know a lot."

He said: "You do know and yet not believe? Knowledge is something, and belief is something else. And there's no value to knowledge without belief. If you know, you should believe in faithful knowledge and that God's power and ability are boundless."

I bowed down my head ashamed; my heart in great confusion, and my thoughts full of contradicting doubts. Although knowing that God is able to do anything, and that the world is full of secrets and mysteries unknown even in our modern age, and the invisible world is full of wonders and puzzles; yet, the problem was that I had never in my life seen a dead person shaking off from his tomb the dust of years and get up. And it baffled me more when he asked me: "What is this city?" "Jerusalem, commander of the Faithful."

"Our Promised Land... I've come over the years to observe and to say.. I don't have but words to utter: how beautiful it is. I've visited it in my life, and put my forehead on its sand kneeling down for God. Its sand had a kind of fragrance that is still stuck in my nose. There are memories too. I tried to visit it another time, but I couldn't. There was some kind of pestilence spreading there and I decided to return that day. Our leader the brave Abou Ubaida Al-Jarrah was protesting by saying: 'Are you escaping from God's Divine Foreordainment Omar?' and I answered him back: 'We escape from God's will to God's will, and our prophet had bid us not to enter apestilent land, or go out from it.' And so I went back."

I said, my tears falling: "Caliph, there's in Jerusalem today a dangerous Pestilence."

He shouted with concern: "Plague?"

"Plague kills a number of people, but this pestilence killed a whole nation, and its history and great values. There are, today, in Jerusalem the Israelites, the evils of this age, who are carrying with them the banners of treachery, hatred, and destruction."

The Caliph shook his head, realizing that I didn't mean one of those dangerous and contagious diseases; and he

said: "I want to go there."
"Impossible."
"How impossible? Are its doors closed? Or is there war and it's surrounded?"
I looked at him for a while and then said: "Do you have an Identity Card?"
"An Identity Card? What do you mean?
"It's an I.D., a legal license, anything that proves your identification."
"I can hardly understand you my son."
"The Israelites, Caliph, won't let you pass."
"Are they high-way robbers, or an aggressive enemy?"

I fell down to his feet, shedding my tears. I was hallucinating and saying: "Jerusalem is under an oppressive occupation. They're taken the old Jerusalem, the Arabic Jerusalem in that disastrous June. Their patrols are wandering in the streets, standing in the corners of the side streets and watching the passers by, inspecting cars; no one can escape from them even women, children and old people. The world has changed, and they're supported by America. Shame is being germinated in our miserable land for years."
I read perplexity in his eyes, and on his radiant face. He explained to me that there was standing between him and me fourteen centuries of time; and he confessed humbly that many words I had uttered he couldn't understand their meaning and that exactly the same thing had happened long ago when they entered Persia and Rome; they found many traditions, languages, names, and conventions that differed greatly from those used in the Arab countries. He asked me to explain to him the meaning of: occupation - June - America - and cars. I started to talk, but a raging uproar stopped us from hearing each other and dissipated the silence. And I saw the caliph raising his eyes towards the sky with astonishment, and he murmured: "The sky is throwing fire and lava at us."
I whispered sadly without showing any sign of fear: "It's the Mirage."
"What do you mean?"
"A plane."

"It's flying in an astonishing speed, and it's passing as if it is directed by someone, not by itself. Or, is it a strange creature which appeared in your age? And what do you mean by the word: "plane"?"

I answered, saddened, my head bowed down: "It's a man-made machine which consists of iron and different metals. It works by petroleum fuel and flies up in the sky stormily, throwing fire, death and horror. It is heartless; it steals victory, spreads out humiliation or ruin in the rows of the enemy, giving glory and power to its owner. It is the blind loyalty, pulling down mountains, destroying houses, and setting on fires. Man has made it with his own hands."

He shook his head in surprise: "God has his own aim with respect to his creatures."

"Commander of the Faithful, it is not created by God."

Omar smiled with certainty, and said: "Man molds iron and doesn't create it. There is a great difference between the one who creates matter from nothing, and the one who in a subtle way, and with his fingers and thoughts gives matter any form."

I looked at him in admiration, for his simple, honest words had impressed me and I said: "That's correct."

Then I explained to him what I meant by the words: June - disaster - and car. And he replied with alertness: "And America?"

"O Commander of the Faithful, it is the strongest and richest country in the world of today."

"But I used to know, long ago, places in the whole world, and I didn't hear of this name at all."

"Caliph of God's Messenger, America was unknown in your age. It was hidden behind wide oceans, and dark seas; isolated, backward, with its Red Indians. Then it was discovered a few centuries ago, and many people immigrated to it where they settled down and inhabited it. And today, America, is the master of the world."

He said: "Is it an Islamic nation?"

"No, Caliph, it's Islam's principal enemy."

Omar frowned, and a look of sadness appeared on his shining forehead, and he said:

"How can you be afraid of any country, even though it is the greatest? We left you and righteousness was prevailing in the whole world; and your belief was mightier than life; and your swords weren't beaten by falsehood.

'Ye are the best community that hath been raised up for mankind.'

You were the best nation sent to teach the people of the world. Don't you read Koran?"

I said in deep despair: "Everything has changed; men and principles have changed. Power isn't on our side anymore. We've become enslaved and we've lost everything but hope."

He hit the palm of one of his hands with the other; his face this time gloomy, and he said: "You don't know God who said ' Ye help Allah, He will help you. ' It's a fixed statement, for these are God's words. I couldn't imagine that this could happen. Can Jews beat you? If someone said in our time that Jews conquered any Islamic city, then people would lay down on their backs laughing. There is some kind of a secret that is unseen. It's hard for me to grasp these things but you're the ones who created this tragedy and nothing else."

Then he turned to me sweating heavily on his forehead and beard: "Come on with me to Jerusalem."

"And the Identity Card?"

"It's not your business."

"I'm worried about you."

"And I don't fear but God."

And he looked ahead, far away, where the immortal city was with its buildings, minarets, and domes; and columns of black and white smoke coming up to the horizon; and Omar moved on; his head raised high, toward the highway and I was on his side. He kept on walking without any sign of fatigue or hesitation; and a number of planes flying past speedily, and tens of small and big cars passing swiftly. He was following all this uproar with astonished looks and he murmured: "It seems that there's nothing in your world but the industrialization of iron."

"Iron has become the means to everything."

"It's all right, for swords were made of iron."

Then he continued after a while: "But the Moslem was stronger than iron with his faith."

Chapter 2

The road stretched on, and I was feeling strangely happy. Wasn't I the promised man who had the honor to accompany a man who is repeatedly mentioned as one of the greatest men in all historical eras? And while I was walking beside him, I could hardly believe it. One day, a friend of mine asked me about the age I'd like to live in; and I used to answer him always that I adored the age of Prophecy with its men and conflicts. And this was a lingering fragrance from of the scent of prophecy. I was afraid of the future, but feeling happy in spite of the apprehensions that were in my mind. On the left side of the road, there was a big tree, full of agility. Its green branches dangling, ready to fall down so that they nearly touched the ground. Beside it, there was a small, decorated tent in which different colors and silver curtains were dancing. Under the tree, a girl and a young man sat; the young man's arm was clasping his charming, gold-haired girl who was near him. Their heads were close, her hand in his other hand; their looks were full of tenderness and ecstasy, hardly aware of their surroundings, carried away in a beautiful, tender, dreamy world. And in front of them, there was a bottle containing a dark-colored liquid, and two cups. Omar's eyes opened wide with astonishment, and he shouted: "What's going on in the middle of the road?"

"Those are the rituals of love, Caliph." He roared in agitation: "It's not proper for a man and his wife to sit like this in front of the people."

I was confused, and couldn't be able to comment at first,

but I said: "They're friends. This is Elie and his girlfriend; I know them." He snarled in fury: "What do you mean? In what kind of right is this debauchery been perpetrated?"

"It's not our business, Caliph."

"Shut up man. The one who keeps silent against what is right is a deaf devil. This is an unparalleled baseness. They must be driven to where they'll get a fair punishment."

And he rushed towards them in excitement; then he found a dry branch of a tree thrown down on the road. He picked it up and held it in a challenging way. And as soon as he reached them, he shouted: "You're going too far in your insolence and rudeness."

The young man uttered some unintelligible words that weren't understood by Omar. Then he leaned toward his girl kissing her in a mocking and careless way. I grasped the Caliph's arm and took him some steps back and said:

"Caliph, it's not our business ; and it's not proper to spoil their pleasure. They're wholly free to do whatever they want. It's their right; and if you don't leave, they'll tell the cops about you."

Omar hit the palm of one of his hands with the other and said: "In what place are we? I can hardly believe what is happening. Who has the right to be punished and judged: me or them? No doubt they got mad, for they're spreading evil and atrocity."

I turned to hold his trembling hand and said imploringly: They're Jews; and they're the ones who are in charge. We can't but leave or..." He snatched back his hand violently and said: "Jews? They haven't changed since a long time. In the past, they used to hide in brothels, and now they're spreading their adultery publicly. If you don't let me be, I'll hit you..."

I tried to explain again to him that Jews were ruling the city; that most women in our age are bareheaded; and that the boys and girls of this generation have the right to live and behave so freely so that this has become something that's protected by law; any going against this "right" leads to a number of troubles. But Omar was in a fit of rage and he cried out so that his voice shook the young man and woman. Their faces appeared pale and full of fear; and he

pounced down on them, hitting them with the stick and that made them run away, frightened and taking homage by a nearby plantation. After the bottle and glasses were broken, Omar stood panting; and being angry, he was rocking the stick in his hand, and he murmured: "I see that corruption has prevailed in an annoying way."

I said: "The way back to God is blocked by huge walls of corruption."

"The true believer doesn't know the impossible. Mountains kneel down for his piety submissively." Then he turned to the broken glass and the spilled liquid and said: "What is this?"

"Wine."

He bit his lip in astonishment: "Adultery, wine at day time, and they don't fear from being punished legally?"

I said: "Oh, God, Omar!! The legal punishments have been annulled, and wine is sold everywhere. The rulers drink wine in public parties and in their houses. They drink it publicly as if they're taking cups of coffee. And brothels take special licenses from the government and are protected by law. Corruption has its own laws, organizing and protecting it." I swallowed then continued: "That's going on not only here but in most countries in the world." He turned to me asking: "Are you truly Moslems?"

"Yes."

"What's your evidence?"

"I'm still saying the Doctrinal Formula, but..."

"But what?"

"Jews are ruling, and their Prime Minister is a woman called Golda Meyer."

Omar said waving his hand: "Where is the Caliph of Moslems in Al-Madina? And where are our valis in the Arabian island: in Iraq, Persia and Egypt? Where are the thousands who hold up the flags and Korans, you who are the generation of humiliation, mockery and frivolity?"

I tried to calm him down. I thought that he would resort to silence in facing a sad reality full of challenges and deviations. There was no way but to tell him the truth in brief words. I tried to give him an idea of what was happening in our time to Moslems; how they were weak and submissive;

how Europe invaded them with its intellect, wickedness, and the newest destructive tools which it invented. So it occupied their countries for many years, spreading its poison in their intellect, religion, and traditions, bringing up among them chaos and confusion, filling their life with suspicions and lies. Then how Moslems woke up, and tried to get back their freedom and land. Then I explained to him what happened to the caliphate, and how it weakened by itself, and how the evil powers grouped together to destroy it. Then I told him about the new values that were ruling in our times, and how Moslems have changed to mere defendents for what remained; and how the united nation, was divided into many small and isolated parts, each of which was ruminating its own misery and lamenting its luck. Omar, his eyes being misty, didn't say more than: "Pre-Islamic Paganism has come back again in the most violent and wicked possible way."

I started to shake my head saying: "We're in need of a new prophet."

He cried out vehemently: "Stop talking, or I will cut your tongue. Your words are impregnated with blasphemy and idiocy. Don't you know that God's Prophet is the last prophet, and there's nothing valid but the Book of Koran? This is an adultrous thinking, not less strange than what I've seen going on between the young man and woman. You give your words away in an idiotic, free way. A new Prophet! It's ridiculous; and what would he say? The last word was and will be uttered and said in the whole world in spite of what you're suffering from disappointment and failure. You're not the first generation and not the last one. Now, I've realized the reason of the Jews' victory over you, and their spreading out dissolution among you.

Fear breeds vice; defeat belittles the ones whose faith is weak. You are hungry in spite of your huge amounts of provisions. You knock on firm, barren doors idiotically; and if you seek for keys, then immortal doors of blessing will be opened for you. Like camels of good stock in the desert, that are killed by thirst, while they're over-loaded with water? Listen lad, the one who commits himself to pick up the remains of the rich, will be bewitched by their words, be-

haviour, and intellect; and he tries to immitate them; and in blind immitation lies the destruction of the mind and soul. Thus the master is transformed to a slave. And if you want to know how a slave turns out to become a master, remember the story of Bilal Ben Rabah; he mocked the rotten intellect of the masters of blasphemy in Mecca. They hit him hard, let him suffer, but he didn't lean to pick up their crumbs. Do you understand me?"

I said with my head bowed down: "yes."

He said: "Let's go on."

He held my hand, and we walked on towards the city. He was trembling from anger and astonishment, walking on quickly, urgently, his movements marked by expressive resentment and tension; and these emotions were clearly seen in his features. At the entrance of the city, there was a nightly watching Israel: check-point. An Israeli soldier came towards us, carrying a machine gun saying in broken Arabic: .

"Identity Card."

I showed him my Identity Card, and he examined it carefully. Then he fixed his looks on my face for some time, and shook his head. Then he threw it at me in a challenging and haughty manner. After that, he turned to the Caliph, while I was trembling from fear and I was wondering: What will he do? And how will Omar face this risky situation? And I imagined what would happen as always: They would lead him to the center - place of the security men for necessary investigations, and may be they would throw him in one of the numerous prison camps; or they would sentence him for some months. Why didn't I handle the matter as I should? Wasn't I able to forge out for him an Identity Card? How could I stand, unable to move, facing this scene? A frivolous soldier exposing the Caliph of God's Messenger's, the one who ruled the nation in the most just way; and the most able ruler after the Prophet, the conqueror of the Persians and Romans, the one who illuminated the Godly message in the East and the West. What kind of a joke will take place?

"And you... Where is your Identity Card?"

"I have no Identity Card. I'm a famous man; it's inevitable that I should pass."

Omar said this watching the soldier, his looks irresistable. The soldier withdrew a few steps backward, and I felt the earth moving underneath my feet, because the machine gun would fire, and in a few minutes, transforming the caliph into blood and nothingness. The modern, hellish tools, Caliph, won't distinguish between the bad and the pure; or between the irreligious and the believers. It's the age of atheists and refusers. I'll attack this soldier to prevent him from committing the greatest sin. Then I opened my eyes to see Omar going on in his way, his head raised high; and the soldier returning back to his tent without protest. Why did these things happen in this strange way? I don't know.

We hadn't walked on for a few steps, when we heard an exclamation and shouting behind us. I turned around, and I saw a car, and inside it a few policemen and Elie with his girlfriend, the two lovers who were drinking the cups of love under the tree. The girl said, while waving with her dyed index finger toward Omar: "It's him, this backward sheikh, and the ones who're like him don't know how to behave and be polite."

Omar went towards her impulsively, with his stick, and roaring: "You, cursed woman... How dare you come in front of me another time? If there were in the city true men they would have whipped you with that boisterous man, so that you would have been an example to other people."

The policeman leaned in front of Omar smiling mischieviously and said: "I beg your pardon, old respectful sheikh: You have to accompany us to the police station."

Omar pointed with his thumb at his chest and said: "me?"

"Yes."

Omar shook his head saying: "I understand.. you ask me for testimony (as a witness). It seems that you have some dignity."

The officer burst out laughing, so that he nearly fell down on his back. Then he assumed a challenging and sombre look, and said: "We're the masters of the world. We aren't in need of an Arab to teach us how to behave and be polite.

You're accused of interferring in the business of others, and of attacking, and hitting two innocents a young man and woman."

Omar said in astonishment: "Innocent? Am I condemned? You are mixing things up."

The girl put her arms around her young man's neck and said laughing: "Elie, darling, this man is so funny, as if he's from the people of the cave. He's a rarity."

Omar's hand stretched out to her neck, pulling her violently, saying: "I can't accept this abusement against morals and legal laws. Silence in such a case is a crime, even if one is surrounded by thousands of policemen." Three policemen tried to pull away the girl from his grasp but in vain. Then Elie took up his pistol and directed it towards Omar and said: "If you don't leave her, I'll empty these bullets in your head."

I rushed forward toward Omar like a mad man and said imploringly: "Leave her alone for God's sake, or a catastrophe will take place."

And in a glimpse, Omar hit the pistol in Elie's hand and it was thrown away. The girl fled to Elie who was furious and confused, and started to say:

"He would nearly have killed me Elie. There's a great power in his hands." Then she started laughing, and she looked alternatively between the furious Elie and his far thrown pistol, and she said:

"This man can wipe out three men like you in a few moments."

Then she returned back to Omar, feeling his arms and hands and saying: "You're a very excitable mature man. I invite you to have dinner with me."

Omar kicked her violently and said: "Take this bitch away from me."

And although she fell down on the ground, she was smiling, strangely astonished. Elie murmured in anger seeing her clothes pulled away, and her adoring looks fixed on the sheikh.

"What are you doing Rachel?"

She answered, while standing up, and shaking off the sand from her clothes: "But I love him Elie. I mean I admire

him. Or am I not free to express my true feelings?"

"It's not the time to joke and to play games in this situation."

She ignored him and facing the officer she said: "I've stopped asking about my right; and I've withdrawn my complaint."

Her looks were directed on Elie while she said: "And Elie does the same."

The officer took out a piece of paper from his pocket, and asked them to write down their signatures. I said to Omar, and I was feeling extremely happy: "We can now move on, thank God." Omar couldn't understand the language spoken by those people; and he murmured: "What happened?"

"God has saved us."

"And those two? Won't they get their own punishment?"

"Caliph..."

"I won't leave this place unless..."

But he stopped talking when he saw the police car starting off, and behind it the steam bicycle that was driven by Elie and Rachel; and behind it was a lot of light smoke.

Omar murmured: "They've run away."

And I said: "We are saved."

He kicked me impatiently, saying: "Your behaviour doesn't befit you as a Moslem. You're too much afraid. "Then he sighed and looked up to the sky: The sun was in its middle, and the weather was too hot. He said in a hurry: "It's time to pray. Today is Friday; let's go to the nearest mosque to accomplish our obligatory prayer; or are you prevented to accomplish God's Ordinance in mosques?"

Chapter 3

We walked up to the basin to perform the ritual ablution. Omar was murmuring some implorations and Koranic verses as he stood behind one of the ablutors till his turn came. He showed his admiration at the cleanliness and the abundant amount of water and he gulped some of it. He didn't hide his approval at its nice taste, but he vehemently disapproved of the obvious way in which it was wasted in its usage; he was extremely pleased in seeing the worshipers coming in successive groups in order to pray, and he whispered: "God's Messenger was right when he said: "Goodness exists in me and my nation till the day of resurrection!"

Then he noticed faces appearing frowning and silent, assuming a look of astonishment and worry; and when he sat in one of the corners of the wide mosque, he touched the splendid rugs, and he looked up to see the big chandeliers and the huge electric bulbs. It seemed to him that this was a kind of unjustifiable extravagance especially in such a time where there was a war going on. He was also surprised at the sight of the high, adorned pulpit which revealed a beautiful, delicate art; and he seemed annoyed when he saw a lot of worshipers overstepping, thus disregarding the rows of people, in order to sit in the front row. He didn't hesitate from standing up, and he started to tell them that to step over worshipers in mosques was not a proper thing, and was forbidden. And he advised every worshiper to sit where his place in the last row was; he was astonished, for he saw that some of them didn't care for what he was talk-

ing about and insisted on stepping over people, and he murmured: "Am I not right? So why don't they listen to me?" Then he heard a strong, tender, delicate and appealing voice reciting the Al-Kahf (The Cave) verse, and he started looking here and there searching for the reader and he said: "Praise be to Allah Who hath revealed the Scripture unto His slave, and hath not placed therein any crookedness". [Koran: Soura Al-Kahf XVIII, The Cave)].

I pointed at a small, raised platform near the pulpit, then at the loud-speakers which added to the reading more clarity, strength and echo. Omar cried, because he was too much moved in hearing those Koranic words. His emotions were mixed with a great happiness, for he heard the Koran read without any deviation or change in words; it was read in the way it was given to the Master of People Mohammad bin Abd Allah, and he said to me later: "I was afraid that you've gone too far in your conceit and deviation so that you might have twisted and changed in the words of God as the Israelites have done in dealing with the Old Testament and as the Christians have done also in the Bible."

Omar was in ecstasy hearing the Koranic verses, but he heard some noise coming from the back, and he looked at a huge man panting, running and saying: "Let there be an empty place for the Imam."

Omar then saw a man walking slowly, bowing his head, having a white skin and a grizzled beard; on his head was a neat, elegant turban. He was dressing a white garment under a silky cloak. In spite of his humbleness and the bowing of the head, the observer might have inspected some kind of boastfulness and arrogance. Omar muttered: "What a luxurious ruler he is!"

Then the announcer of the hour of prayer (muezzin) called people to pray and the preacher delivered the Muslim Friday sermons and the people stood up to pray. As soon as the Imam's prayer was over, chaos prevailed all over in the mosque and shouting was heard here and there and the worshipers started to try to get ahead of each other and pushing each other toward the doors.

In the meantime, a shabby - dressed man stood among them; he seemed weak and he looked imploringly around.

He was uttering imploring words, stretching out his hands asking for money and help from the generous. The crowded bodies started to shove Omar from every direction so that he nearly was to burst out protesting against this behaviour in the House of God. But he repented to God and clinged to patience and muttered while we were leaving the mosque: "As if they're running away from a pestilence. I'm afraid that their prayer is a mere gesture that is dead and spiritless. Where's their submissiveness and humbleness? and where are the hearts that are close to God? The container is empty of any kind of drink. What you're interested in only is the appearance. Your worship has no depth. I'm afraid that what I'm saying is true." He stopped talking for a while, then he continued:

"I haven't understood much of what your preacher has said; and why was he holding some papers in his hand? As if these papers were a thick curtain bringing your hearts apart. What did he say? Ah! short skirts?"

I said, controlling myself from laughing: "A new fashion."

"What do you mean?"

"It's a short dress that women put on; its length reaches high up above the knee. Haven't you seen something like this in the streets?"

"I've understood that the victorious Jews are the only ones who dress up like this."

"It's a madness that hit the whole world."

"And Moslems?"

"Lots of Moslem girls dress up like this, Caliph."

His face was flushed and he muttered in anger: "Isn't there a rational, truly faithful man among you?"

"This kind of man is present, but he talks only, and he hasn't the least power to do anything."

"My son, there are people who can be stopped by words only, and others who don't behave except by being whipped. You are Moslems, having the manners of the Jews."

I muttered in misery: "This is a true statement." Yes, religion has become mere words and advices given, tears poured out, and festivals held. Dirty hands could take off from religion its power and mastery.

Its men abandoned the trust put in their hands and they gave up their right; and so religion shrank in cemeteries, small mosques, meetings, and in libraries. "This is true Caliph."

After thinking for a while he said: "You've been defeated a long time ago; I can see an invisible power has conspired against you. It has stolen faith from you and stuffed your hearts with papers and distorted toys. Men were listening to the preacher in the mosque without any emotion. The preacher was roaring in such a powerful voice I haven't heard a voice like it before. But he chattered much without any reason. He was more interested in decorating the words and joining the sentences together, and in the pronunciation of the letters. The problem was that he had many mistakes, even Arabic was uttered through his lips in a strange flimsy way. How can you misuse the words and the Koran is in your hands? It's the rule. You are really strange. I could almost deny everything I see and hear. You're a big lie in history. Your life, intellect and education are false; there isn't such a kind of falseness other than the one that is found in your life, intellect and education. Your existence is not real; where is the Moslem man? It's a must that we should look out for him." I smiled; his words touched me very much; they were full of truth. The tragedy was complicated and it had lasted for a long time. Its roots were beating in the depth of our existence, enveloped by perplexity, doubt and darkness. Our generation was hypnotized and lost. I felt very much hungry: "Caliph, don't you want to eat?"

"I haven't felt hungry yet."

"It's lunch time."

"We're people who don't eat except when we're hungry."

"There are specific times for eating, and these times are determined in accordance with circumstances of work and doctors' advices."

"No doubt you all have stomach ache." Soon, he forgot the subject of eating and started to look closely at the road and he gazed at the people coming to and fro. He was absorbed

by the sound of the cars, the ringing of the bells; and the humming of the planes.
"What's this building?"
"The church of resurrection, Caliph."
"Did the misfortune fall on the Christians too?"
"Yes."
Then he continued by asking: "Is America a Jewish country?"
"No, it believes in Christ."
"How did they abandon their Christian fellow men and helped the Jews who fought Jesus and tried to crucify him?"
"This needs much time for interpretation."
"It's hard to understand the reason of what's going on in your world: Your mosques are huge, dazzling the one who sees them in their beauty and neatness. Your platforms are high, decorated and serenely colored, and the hanging chandliers surpass the ones found in Kosrau's and Caesar's palaces; the crowding people dazzle the eye; you know well how to read the Koran; but you're completely in a state of decay. It's an unbelievable contradiction! I see riot looming up everywhere. How could the Jews unite and how did they come to have an existence?"
I shook my head in despair and said: "With patience, good planning, watchful thinking, new technology and power of money; and thus they were in control of countries and prominent personalities."
He said: "They've taken from Moslems some of their virtues."
He kept on walking some steps more, then he said: "but they lack the most important thing."
"What is it?"
"An ideology."
"They have the Old Testament, Caliph."
"This falseness and distorted version which they made by their own hands? Are they still calling it Old Testament? How can you be deceived by Decayed mummies!"
Suddenly a big explosion was heard and the ground shook under our feet. Bits of wood and glass were scattered and stones were hurled; the sky was blocked by dust and

smoke and stinging smells. Shouts were heard from everywhere and Omar whispered: "What has happened?"

I Answered trembling: "Come on, let's hide before they drive us to hell."

"I won't move till I get everything clear."

"They are explosives caliph, that were set up by the Palestinian commandos at an Israeli guarding check point, which has done much harm to the Arabs, so they blew it up and no doubt this explosion has killed all the members, that were there. And in a moment, the earth will be toppled upside down. Come on."

Omar stood fixedly in his place asking for more details. I told him that explosives are a kind of modern, destructive, fatal weapons, and that the Palestinian Arabs, the owners of the land which was taken over by the Jews, haven't given up yet, and they're going on in their resistance secretly with their limited capacity, thus disturbing the enemy's safety, day and night. They do these things while they're disguised, so that they won't be exposed by the check points or invaded by the enemy from every direction. Some of them, die as martyrs in the battle, and some are saved, and others are arrested and they're led to the darkness of the prison where there is terrible suffering and harsh death. Omar shook his head in astonishment and said: "In spite of the enemy's victory and its unsurpassable excellency, technology and shrewdness; yet, a bunch of men come to do all this?"

I replied feeling proud: "yes."

A tender smile appeared on his pure mouth lightning up amidst smoke and dust; and he said: "They are the goodness that is left in your world. Maybe they are the Moslems whom I haven't found a trace of in the mosques and streets."

I had forgotten what was going on around me, and was thinking of another world and I muttered: "They're living there in the cave, and valleys, on the top of the mountains, working hard night and day. They had sacrificed themselves to God, going through death, fear, despair. They are brave men and thus they devote themselves to Jihad."

Omar looked up to the sky and in delight he murmured:

"I want to see them."
Then he turned to me suddenly and asked: "Why hasn't your preacher mentioned them?"
"He is watched, and the Israeli authorities impose on him the topic of the sermon."
"So, they are the ones who preach."
I said, and agony was biting my heart:
"So, they're the ones who're preaching."
"Even in Islamic countries something like this happens! What is satisfying to the ruler is religious, and what is the opposite of their view is blashemy and atheism. Submissiveness, has made up for us a new religion of blind intellect."
I glimpsed in the sky, a helicopter flying up and I saw the enemy's cars and tanks coming forward, so I cried in panic: "Come on Caliph, before the enemy rushes on upon us, accusing us of placing the explosives and belonging to the Palestinian groups."
We hardly could turn around, when we were surrounded from every direction, the muzzles of machine guns were directed towards us and looks of hatred were surrounding us; we were trapped.

Chapter 4

All the agonies of the world burdened my sad heart. I wasn't worried about myself, but my fear for the Caliph blocked out every kind of selfishness. The zionist generation that is full of hatred, doesn't distinguish between a prophet and a devil. In ancient times, they used to kill prophets. Mercy in their opinion is considered idiocy, I know them. And the price of forgiveness costs so much that it's refused by honest people. Brotherhood is a weakness or impotence. This wasn't the first time I was surrounded by their fire and hatred. Many times they led me to the concentration camps and each time my innocence was proved with a cogent proof. But I wasn't to escape the darkness of suffering except after being whipped, beaten, cursed, hungered and thirsted. Omar was a dear, beloved guest, having no identification, refusing submissiveness and giving up. And the one who treats them like this, goes only to his tomb. I know them, they want to kill any man whose behaviour denotes virtue; they're the enemy of virtue. But how it was strange, that the Caliph should stand, with his head raised high, his nerves being cool, and the smile lightning up his face. Faith was gleaming in his eyes, and his appearance was blessed by a unique kind of faith. I asked him: "Aren't you afraid? Madness, hatred, hunger and even the flesh of the innocence are surrounding us from every side."

He said with a clear voice:

"My beloved one has taught me that fear is a waste of energy and time; it spoils faith and it is an everlasting humiliation."

Then he turned towards them and said:
"What do you want from us?"
"This crime was caused by you."
"What is your evidence?"
"You are Arabs first; and you were here second; treachery and destroying is a part of your nature."
I was almost stunned seeing Omar raising up his hand and slap the officer's face and saying: "You fool, you set up the basis of justice leaning on doubts and suspicions, then you curse the natives of the land."
The devils rushed on Omar, and in moments I saw his hands clutched behind his back. And from an unknown place, came up some shots; so I crawled on the ground, nearly losing my consciousness, as if I were suffering from a terrible nightmare. Then I woke up feeling a tender hand touching my head; I looked up and saw Omar standing up calmly, smiling, without any clutches or fears. And I cried out: "What has happened?"
"You can see them thrown down on the ground. I don't know, all I can say is that power only belongs to God."
"No doubt, Caliph, that "Fath Men" were watching the interesting scene."
I saw him looking up at the sad, dusty horizon as if he were coming across the barriers of time and place chanting in a tender voice full of grief:
"On the day of "Al-Ahzab" battle, lad, disbelief gathered its people, arms, and shrewdness and they surrounded "Yathrib"... Do you know? We dug a trench as Salman the Persian had directed. To escape that damned seige seemed logically quite impossible. We were surrounded also with hunger, cold, and deceit. We were a minority of men, arms money and food. Do you know? The Jews who belonged to the Kuraiza tribe were our allies. They were protecting the city from the back, supplying us with some food. Then they joined the enemy and we were caught between two fires. Logically, the meaning of all this was death and ruin for us all. Do you remember this? I'm not telling a fictional myth. My beloved the God's Messenger promised us the treasury of Caesar and Khosrau at that specific time and who could believe it? Some man laughed and said:

'Mohammad is promising us the treasures of Caesar and Khosrau, and anyone of us wasn't safe enough to go to the toilet'. It's interesting that a highly - respectable man from the enemies came to us announcing his conversion to Islam. Had he come to burden himself with a lot of defeat and hardship?"

Omar wiped his forehead and beard. His smile brightened up more and he continued: "We were victorious and "Allah repulsed the disbelievers in their wrath; they gained no good". Yes, we've defeated fear by faith and we hastened toward death and so life was given back to us." Then he swallowed: "The earth won't be empty from faith and the faithful in any age."

I said in confusion:

"I think we have to hurry up before the enemy rushes on toward us."

Omar said without feeling any alarm: "We have to leave this place now."

After a while, we were able to go by a big bus. First class seats were all occupied and the passengers were absorbed with the accident. We crossed the entrance to the second class section. I was feeling extreme embarrassment because the caliph was in the middle of the crowded workers. But he didn't show the least complaint, and while he was forcing his way towards the back row of the bus, a girl held his hand and said: "It's him Elie. I won't let him go away from me this time."

Elie snatched her hand away violently and he said: "This kind of amusement makes me sick."

"But I want him Elie."

A man commented in sarcasm: "Give her to him, brother, for God's sake." Elie stood up, enraged, his looks were directed everywhere, then he came near the Caliph and said, his eyes gleaming with anger: "If you don't leave the bus, I'll throw you on the high-way and your bones will be broken."

I threw myself between them, ready to sacrifice my life so as the caliph won't be the least hurt and I saw the Caliph looking at him in astonishment saying: "You have no right to get me down this riding animal."

Some passenger laughed when they heard the word 'riding animal', and the Caliph went on: "We've paid in order to come up. Besides, you can't carry out your threat because you're too weak to do it."

Elie raised up his fist in rage, trying to hit the Caliph's face, but the Caliph held it up and squeezed it violently so that Elie started to cry out for help.

Laughter was filling the quarters of the bus, and the malicious comments were enflaming Elie's face with their stingness. Rachel hurried up, dragging Elie by the hand and saying:

"This is the descent station. You've done a great damage to yourself." He muttered in hatred:

"You're the one who caused all this trouble and yet you blame me?"

Chapter 5

In the end, I reached home. It is in the old, Arabian section of Jerusalem. It is composed of a tiny apartment having two rooms and one hall No one was staying with me but my mother whose age reached sixty. Let God have mercy on my father for he was a good man. He owned a small, wooden stand, selling in it soft drinks, papers, pens, newspapers and candies for children. In June 1967, a stray bomb hit the stand along with the people who were in it and the things that were there; Dad was killed. I cried a lot, exactly the way I cried for my brothers who were killed in the field of the battle. The house, in spite of its humbleness and the signs of poverty which characterized it, was neat, quiet and humid. Its floor was covered with a cheap kind of long, local carpets, but it was nice-looking. The house was also supplied with electricity and pure water. On its walls, that were painted with light-blue gypsum, were hanged a number of pictures the most important of which was my father's who was killed; there was also an Arabic and a foreign calendar, a map of ancient Palestine, a signboard written on it with a big hand writing "God" and a clock.

I let the Caliph enter my private bed-room, and then I hurried up to my mother. "How can I tell the good news? You won't believe me."

"Well.. have the Arabian Forces moved? and has the time of salvation come?"

"No, but an unreachable honor has come to stay here."

She said slightly bored:

"May I prepare for you the food?"

"Why aren't you interested in the matter?"

"I know one of the resistance men." I said, embracing her and filling her forehead with kisses: "Omar Ben Al-Khattab."

"She looked at me suspiciously, and I glimpsed apprehension in her looks, and her tears were nearly falling down; I said immediately: "I'm not crazy. The earth will turn upside-down when the news spread out. Do you believe in God's power mother?"

"She seemed concerned and stared in wonder saying absent-mindedly:

"And how can Omar come in this age of devils?"

"I swear I don't lie. I saw him there; I've heard his words as if I were drinking from the source of Prophecy. Something great is happening; be aware and don't let doubt shake your belief in God's ability. Prepare the food and be cheerful, mom."

I rushed back to the Caliph leaving my mother in her perplexity and amazement. In my bedroom, there was a small library consisting of some philosophical, psychological, literary, political and religious books. Omar was sitting on a wooden armchair covered with a comfortable mattress, and he pointed at the bookshelves saying:

"What is this?"

"A collection of writings about different topics."

"But they are small in size."

I knew that old writings were recorded on bones, wood, and some parts of palm trees and stones. I took one of the books and said: "It contains a lot of information, for the letters are tiny and the lines are many and this is due to the invention of paper and typing."

Omar showed his delight at this amazing invention. His surprise increased when he knew that the typing machine could produce ten thousands of copies in a short time. I smiled as I offered him another book.

"This book is about you."

A look of astonishment appeared in his eyes and asked: "About me?"

"Yes."

"Do the people of this age know about me?"

"Maybe they know about you more than the previous peo-

ple had known. You're quite famous both in the East and the West. You have a renowned name echoed everywhere. Christians have written about you more than Moslems. You have fans and admirers, as well as you have enemies and critics.

They know the details of your life: How you lived in pre-Islamic times. How you'd become a Moslem; and your friendship with the Messenger of God; the battles you've shared in; your fighting in Byzantine and Persia; Your many opinions that dealt with many subjects and your connection with other men, even your private life, imagine; and also your martyrdom by the ones who hated and plotted against Islam. There's no need for you to be introduced."

Omar was looking at me, hardly believing what I was telling him. He started to talk about the narrators: the honest and the dishonest, and the ones who were extremely imaginative. Then he took the book and started to read through it; it seemed to me that he found difficulty in reading some words due to the change of the forms of the letters from the prophecy days. So he asked me to read a page from the book, and I took it and started to read: "when the next day came, Abu Bakr sat in the mosque and Omar stood up apologizing to the Moslems because he had mentioned to them that the Messenger of God wasn't dead. He said: ' I've told you yesterday something, and neither it was found in the Book of God, nor it was a promise given by the Messenger of God. But I thought that the Messenger would handle our matters and would stay till the end, and that God has kept for you his Book with which He had guided His Messenger; if you guard, preserve and resort to it; then God would guide you to the right way, as He did guide through this Book the Messenger before you. God has entrusted the best of you to handle your affairs: the friend of the Messenger of God, and the second man of the two who were in the cave; so get up and pledge allegiance to him.' And all the men got up together and pledged the common allegiance after the allegiance of the sakifa." Then I closed the book. Omar was shaking his head while I was reading the paragraphs and tears were falling down from his

eyes, wetting his white beard. Finally, I heard him saying while he was drying up his tears: "those were terrible days. The God's Messenger's death was a shock I couldn't bear at first. This is correct; I didn't know what to say and what to do. Abu Bakr Al-Siddik was the most faithful of all, and his belief was the strongest. And he accepted the matter with intelligence and full understanding you know a lot about our lives."

I said, resisting my hesitation: "And we know about your disagreement in opinion with Khalid Ben Al-Walid. The people in our age also disagree about this as the Moslems in your age have done."

Omar raised up his pure face to me and he said: "The thing was simpler than what you imagine. Khalid was brave, religious and an experienced soldier. We can't deny all this; but, there's no man who doesn't do any wrong. And I've thought, for many reasons connected with the safety and existence of the nation to relieve Khalid, and I had done it and Khalid accepted it. The welfare of religion and the citizens matter more than individuals even if those individuals were prominent and did achieve many victories." I said: "Hundreds of books wrote about your courage, justice, humbleness and farsight, and your isolation from the world and its lies and glitter. You were the most wonderful example smelling musk in the whole history." He waved his hand protesting: "God forbid. I wasn't a man extremely sublime and virteous. I was a human being with what the word 'human being' means. And there were tens of thousands of Moslems who weren't less than Omar in their piety and faith, they may even have surpassed him in courage, justice and faith. In reality, I protected and preserved religion less than them because to rule means being dragged to a lot of weaknesses and even sins sometimes". He went on to wipe a tear which fell down through his eye-lashes. "I was afraid to meet God. If a mule stumbled in Iraq, I would have been asked in front of God why I haven't mended its way? To rule is a great responsibility, and thus may lessen my value on the Judgement Day."

I said approvingly: "You're a humble man." He cried out vehemently: "I don't humble myself to be prominent; and I

hate lies and deceit. I wouldn't neglect the responsibility of governing dead or alive. And because of this, I imposed a condition that my son won't be assigned as a caliph after me." A knocking on the door interrupted our conversation; my mother had already prepared the food. So I took it from her and put it on the table and said: "No doubt you're hungry now."

He looked at the full table and said: "What is this? Chicken, lamb meat, fresh and cooked vegetables, fruits, herbs and other things which I don't know their name."

"And what do we eat?"

"Do you have dried dates?"

"Sometimes".

Then he took a spoon, a fork and a knife and asked: "What are these?"

"Tools we use so that we won't eat with our hands directly."

"Complexity in everything.. I thought they are a kind of small weapons." He invoked God over by saying: "By the name of God", then he implored: "May God bless our money and save us from the suffering of Hell." Then he took a loaf of bread and a piece of meat and a few dates. He was eating slowly and chewing well and thanking God from time to time. He drank a few sips of water and said: "Your water is so cold." "Thanks for the refrigirators." He said, as he wiped his clean mouth with the palm of his hand: "Thank God." He noticed that I was eating greedily, for I've suffered from starvation: "You'll suffer from indigestion. A quarter of what you've eaten is enough for you."

"I have a ravenous appetite."

"You don't have a will of your own. Your stomach will suffer from ageing and weakness." I said: "These are the pleasures of the table that God has produced for his creatures." "God forbid, my son.. I don't deny them, but I invite you to be moderate and economical; have you forgotten? And if we eat, our appetites won't be satisfied: "It's true."

The caliph continued after a while: "Don't you notice that if your stomach is full, your organs will slow down, so

you'll resort to laziness and you tend to sleep; but you're in a war."

Then we heard a noise at the door. My heart started to beat out of fear, and my lips stopped from moving, and my hand remained suspended as a stony statue's hand and mother cried out from inside: "The devils have come. I can see their tanks and cars from the window, won't you escape?"

I didn't know what to do.. It's a disaster this time, and their return means a serious thing. And if they haven't found the 'criminal', then a catastrophe would fall over our heads. How can we prove our innocence in front of these barbarians? Suddenly the door was broken and I saw them in front of me. The hall was filled with them; the same faces, the same oppenings of bombers, and the same hating eyes that emitted sparks of fire. Omar was walking among the soldiers with his firm body and calm smile. He was muttering some words in which he was imploring God. In fact, I was trembling, but he put out his hand and touched me as he said: "What do you say about two persons and God is with them?"

Then he laughed serenely: "I couldn't imagine you'll be so much afraid."

"They have no mercy."

"And what's behind this?"

"Death, caliph."

"And have you heard of any human being who could escape from death?"

"No."

"Then, why is the fear for?"

I said, beating on my chest: "It's something inside me which I can't resist."

"There are a lot of things in your life which you can't resist, exactly as when you couldn't stop your gluttony while eating."

"It makes me sad to die before I can bake my revenge."

The glances he gave me were full of reproval as he said: "This is conceit itself. As if the destiny of the earth is tied to an individual like myself or you. Hundreds of thousands of men are born. They fight and then they win. Lots die.. Ham-

za was killed in the battle and Omar lived. Life is going on; Hamza was an unsurpassable rider, he was the Messenger's uncle. The one who ties in the field is a martyr and the martyr is alive, he can't die.. You read and yet you don't believe and you philosophize your weakness."

Chapter 6

Prison, night, deprivacy, and the mysterious future, all of which compose a strange world isolated by itself. Distorted embryos are born in this world, celebrated by a dirty adultery as if the guards, at the door, before entering had naked themselves of what the word 'human being' means. It is a jungle, full of miseries, having its own laws if these are to be called laws. In reality, these laws are the desires of idiotic beings, fulfilling their base instincts, and thus they treat the poor one, in whatever way they like. Even, a murderer can't be imposed to live this misfortune, for he may kill the monster because he is hungry. But those kill human beings for the sake of luxury and to assure their ability, celebrating the stolen victory. These are the zionists behind the bars.

There, was the investigation court, and the men of the enemy were scattered in it, filling it with noise and shouting, Omar looked and cried out: "What am I seeing?"

My eyes turned to where he was looking: There was a number of men tied with ropes to iron bars, hanging in the air, and a continuous low moaning arising. They were naked, and in many places in their bodies, were red lines bleeding dark blood. The investigator was saying, as he smoked his cigar in a strange, cool calmness: "We are sure that you've received the money in Amman (Jordan) and you've smuggled it to the West Bank and gave it to a veiled woman. But you haven't told us about the arms."

The prisoner was restless, saying in a weak voice: "I don't know.. I don't know."

The investigator was directing at him the looks of a spot-

ted snake, putting the edge of the burning cigar on the prisoner's cheek; the prisoner was shaking, but being tied and tightened to the bars, he just moaned. The investigator went back to say: "The hostile articles were received from you by a student in the high-school, putting on shorts, what's his name? Where does he live?" And the prisoner was whispering: "I've said I don't know, I don't know."

The Caliph bit his lips in misery and said: "Hatred has bred,over the years, in the hearts of the Israelites. They're indisputably the stain of this age."

I said: "Caliph, lower your voice."

"Is the word a crime?"

"Yes, specially if it is full of criticism and dissatisfaction."

He muttered in amasement: "Inside the courtyard of Caesar, any poor Arab used to raise up his head and he could hit with his spear in his own territory. While Omar doesn't dare to ask these vile and furious people. It would have been better if I'm not alive."

I said: "Caliph, this is totally a different matter; these are accused of being commandos, and the zionists torture them to snatch out their confessions."

His pale face brightened up and he cried out: "As if I'm seeing Bilal Ben Rabah and Khabab Ben Al-Aratt, Yasser and Sumaya. There is in your age something great which I didn't notice before. These are the truly, unshakable believers." One of the secret service men came forward towards me, and challenge was clearly shown in his gestures and features. Then he pushed me with his fist and asked: "What are you talking about?" Then he raised his hand and tried to slap Omar.

And how intense was my astonishment when I saw the Caliph catching the officer's hand before being able to perform what he had wanted and he thundered: "Take your hand off me or I'll cut it."

I interfered, sensing fear, and said to the officer: "I beg your pardon. He's an old sheikh and he spent most of his life in the desert, not knowing anything about these matters."

I couldn't believe my eyes later, when I saw Elie coming and on his lips was an obvious revengeful smile. He came

near Omar and winked with one of his eyes and said: "At last, you're caught you 'Don Juan'."

Omar looked around in rage and muttered "The Don? this idiot is cursing me."

Elie burst out laughing, while I said quickly: "He doesn't mean that for sure. It's a word meaning that you're adorable by women."

"I don't understand."

"Have you forgotten Rachel's admiration for you?"

Omar turned around the palms of his hands and he looked over the place swiftly then he said: "There are strange things going on here, aren't they? Are these the ones who fought you and they were victorious? Are your necks truly under their mercy? How come!"

Elie remained laughing loudly and at last he said: "I'll go to see Rachel at once and tell her this interesting news."

Between one hour and the other, the guards came over, pushing forward newcomers who were suspected. And from time to time, a man would be bared off from his clothes and then whipped all over his body. They then showered him with dirty curses and some secret service men would hold some papers and pens, writing down questions and answers as if they were in a hurry. The words repeated were: arms - commandos - hiding places - speak up - confess - death - prison - we'll blow up your house - we'll torture your sister and mother...

You might hear a boy crying out from severe pain or another one wailing due to extreme humiliation. There would be also, a tied person who might roar, the way a lion roars in an iron cage. The other prisoners kept on being silent, not uttering a word, and from their eyes; terrified looks could be seen; suffering adding to these looks more vividness, acuteness and fire. While the zionist intelligence men, were drinking the full cups, singing and dancing, whipping and directing questions; and Omar witnessed all this turning his looks from one place to another.

"It's a strange kind of confrontation."

"What do you mean Caliph?"

"It is a violent struggle between right and wrong. These are hard, embarrassing times resembling the ages where the

prophets were sent over. How much I feel sad for your great misfortune. But seeing these resisting people, eased some of my sadness."

The caliph was thinking over, about the public misfortune, viewing it from all directions and levels, scrutinizing and studying it, forgetting that he was condemned, and that he might be questioned after a while, and for this I said: "Caliph, what will you say to them: They'll ask you."

He shouted: "It's a great shame to have an immoral, drunk Jew to be in the place of the judge on a Moslem's land. Something great has been happening in this age: A bunch of liars and corrupters managing your destiny and future. I'll say I'm Omar Ben Al-Khattab, and they'll laugh; they hate me. I've known this since the Messenger's time, they planned to kill me. They won't believe what I'll say, that I'm a Moslem from the tribe of Uday, I was raised up in Mecca, then I was its ambassador. I was obstinate, and violent in my war against Mohammad at first, then my heart was lightened up with faith, and from that time on, I was born again."

I said being worried: "This won't concern them. They don't care much or little about this, and they won't believe you. What's important is the incident."

"What incident?"

"The explosives..."

"What? You know the truth. I wish I've done it; and I have no right to attribute this superior act to myself."

I looked behind me, and saw a man from the intelligence bureau hiding there, and recording on a machine, all what Omar had been saying. Then he turned around and faced Omar. I wanted, before this, to tell the caliph to hide his personality for a while and to choose for himself a borrowed name to avoid a lot of trouble. But it was too late, for there was the zionist reporter saying: "So you're Omar?"

Omar shook his head persistently and said: "Yes, and do whatever you want, because I don't fear but God."

"Leave God alone now... I'm the one who is facing you."

"Omar shouted: "Beat it.."

The man started to laugh aloud, pleased and swaying

right and left; then he sized up Omar with his looks and said to me winking: "You resemble him to a great extent." He then, started to wave his index finger warningly: "I was born in Cairo. Do you know the intakana?"

Omar looked towards me and I explained: "A place of ancient ruins."

The secret service man burst out laughing another time, and he said: "You belong there, near the mummies and works of art." Then he left us and hurried up to his friends, and then he came back with them to show them the interesting discovery, and the unique case. Omar stood up among them, a challenging, defiant giant mocking their nonesense and silly talk.

"So you're Omar?"

"Why not?"

"The proof?

"God's ability."

"The dead won't be resurrected."

"But they will be, you liar, beat you..."

"This is not the time of resurrection."

"How canst thou know? It may be that the Hour is nigh."

The man said sarcastically: "Omar, I don't deny God's ability. But the events of modern history haven't witnessed anything outside the natural laws; they didn't witness a miracle."

It stunned me to see Omar gripping the man's ear between his index finger and thumb, and said: "These words don't negate God's ability."

"You're not subtle... you manage the conversation with intelligence. No doubt you were an important diplomat."

"The secret service men burst out laughing, and they started to inspect Omar without touching him. One of them said: "This is known case in medical and psychological books. It is one of the diseases related to madness and split personality. This sheikh is transmigrating the body and personality of Omar Ben Al-Khattab. Illusion had led him to believe that he is him. During violent wars, strange diseases emerge. Defeat has affected the Arabs' nerves and they're fond of the past and old heroisms, ruminating them in the

nights of suffering. The morbid case of this man is interesting, because it hit a relatively old man. Our doctors will be pleased with this case in the mental and psychological sanitariums."

One of them leaned toward Omar and asked him in a tone of sarcasm: "Tell us about your conquests in Persia and Byzantine."

"Don't you know?"

"What was strange that your quite insignificant forces could control and handle the peace in these wide areas in which millions of human beings lived, how? This is the question. We're going through the same problem in these days."

Although the conversation was a mere jest, but Omar said seriously: "We were propagandists, before being warriors; we brought to those people the light of God. The happiest moments were the ones when a man came announcing his belief. We were pleased with this more than our pleasure in conquering a fort or defeating an army."

Omar looked up at the sky and said: "Our aim was to fix, and let belief be steady and rooted in the hearts, rather than to put our feet on the conquered land the ones who became believers were a part of our army."

The Israelite said: "We're carrying with us a civilization as you did."

And Omar said: "We carried with us a doctrine first, and under a wholly true doctrine or virtuous values, civilizations are born and human beings are happy."

Omar's face changed and he pointed with his hand at the big guard and shouted: "Is this the civilization you're carrying with you? You who are the new generation of Hayy Ben Akhtab and Kenana Ben al-Rabei and Kaab ben al-Ashraf?" They burst out laughing again; then a sudden gloom prevailed over them, while Omar continued as if he was preaching among people: "You've won in one battle, then you filled the world with clamor and guided the innocent to the gallows, and hanged the wronged people from their legs as slaughtered camels.

But we, and there stands between you and us fourteen centuries, we conquered the world with enlightenment; we

filled it with faith; not a wronged being was hanged from a column; not a man passed away without being condemned; we didn't silence anyone, for the Book of God (Koran) was judging us or against us." Silence prevailed; then another man moved forward toward Omar directing at him astonishing looks and he said: "These aren't words uttered by a madman, I swear to God."

Omar smiled and said: "Sometimes, a man's inside is revealed by the words he utters." Then the man continued: "He is trying to deceive us. I think he's one of the spiritual Islamic leaders, putting on the clothes of a legend."

Omar replied impatiently: "Your smartness has changed to a professional senility; you're the mad one."

The officer's face flushed up and he shouted: "Where have you found him?"

At this time, Elie appeared and he said, revealing his desire in taking revenge: "He was in the place where the explosion took place and he escaped."

"Take him to cell 64, and prepare for him a delicious meal."

Omar said, waving his index finger, warning them: "I won't eat your food; haven't forgotten the poisoned sheep which was offered to the Messenger by Zeinab, the daughter of Al-Hareth, on that day of victory of the battle of Khaibar."

They burst out laughing again. The Caliph didn't know that the heavy meal in the conventions of the Intelligence Bureau meant unbearable torture. And in spite of what I was going through of pain and miseries, yet, I felt to some extent greatly relieved when they led me also to the cell which bore the number 64. I was worried about the Caliph much more than myself, and his impressive words were still humming in my ears and echoed in my mind, thus giving me more faith and patience.

The night I've spent there was full of agonies. They took me after an hour to the officer responsible for investigating me, and who confronted me with a complete file about my past and my family's history since the year 1936, and Ezz Eddin Al-Kassam's revolution; and also about my brother who was working in Fatah as a prominent leader; and my

eldest sister's husband who was working as an engineer in Kuwait and gathering contributions for the commandos men, and delivering speeches; also that file contained information about my sister who was teaching in Cairo. She was a member of an Arab womanly organization and who was known for her great activities. Briefly, they knew about me more than they should have. I felt great pain, because of the whipping, especially in the beginning. A sense of being wronged and ill-treated filled me so that I was nearly out of my mind; and my feeling of impotence hurt me so much and I was thinking that if only I would be alive again, I would take my revenge for those deadly miseries and agonies. To take revenge for the sake of the wronged and tortured people from the one who scourged them, is a sacred right. Then I returned to the cell; I couldn't sleep, for my mental wounds were stronger and harder than my bodily wounds; although my body was screaming out due to horrible pain. Omar was sitting near me, putting on my head tenderly, wiping my blood with the edge of his clean clothes, and I felt greatly comforted. I was looking at his pure face, and then remembered that they would lead him in the morning to the damned courtyard, and I closed my eyes when I imagined the irreligious mad scourging and whipping on his face, and I cried: "Impossible", and he said in compassion: "What's the matter with you my son?" And I answered, my tears falling down: "I can't imagine that they'll torture you." And he muttered: "None knoweth the hosts of thy Lord save Him."

The amazing thing, was that on the next day, and around 12.30 at noon, the Caliph was performing the noon prayer as an Imam after he rubbed his hands with sand instead of ablution, for there was no sufficiency of water. Then a zionist policeman came; He was originally from Yaman. Then he called Omar and called out my name also. When we stood in front of the headmaster of the prison, he said, while a yellowish smile wavered around his thin lipped mouth:

"Congratulations.. your innocence has been proved, and we've caught some criminals. An order to set you free has been issued; you should thank the Israelite citizen Rachel; she is an honest citizen."

I was overwhelmed with joy, but I heard the Caliph saying: "And where are these criminals? How I long to see them!"

I held the Caliph's hand tenderly and said imploringly: "For God's sake.. Come on, because this is a difficult demand which can't be achieved."

Chapter 7

We went on walking on the highway, our steps being slow. Memories were haunting me, and the painful scenes were surrounding me. But I remembered how we were saved from this accidental suffering, and so I thanked God and my soul knelt down thanking Him. What would have happened if things had gone on in the usual way under such indiscriminate accusations? I was led to imagine that Omar was given a sublime power which could remove the obstacles put by the enemies in the way, or how could I explain that behaviour of Rachel? How could the Caliph have spent this time in prison without being hurt?

Omar was walking on, bowing his head, meditating, sad, hardly caring for anything on the road. I asked him: "What's bothering you, God's Messenger's friend, and we've been rescued from their tyranny?"

He looked at me reprovingly; his look was carrying a lot of meanings and he started to say: "We've left behind us a number of innocent people in the darkness of the prison. One of them leaned toward me whispering: 'I'll give you my poor sister's address whom her husband was killed here with us, to give her some money.' So, how can I not be sad? How many women, children and old men are now suffering from starvation and deprivacy?"

Omar went on telling me about our duty towards the miserable families, and he put the blame on our harsh hearts, emphasizing that we had been missing the coordination and the unification needed in such violent conflicts. I said to him: "Yes, Caliph, we're a torn country; its land being conquered; its people being scattered everywhere. We don't

have a government or a budget or an administrative system. Palestine today, is a number of vagabonds, or warriors, or prisoners. You're putting on our shoulder a burden which is more than we can bear."

He shook his shoulder in rejection and said: "What is Palestine? Isn't it a small piece of the land of Islam? Where are the other Moslems and their rulers? What you're saying is a strange thing, as if the doctrinal tie is thoroughly torn." I said: "Some of them give us weapons; and others are generous enough to give us money, and all of these are for the fighters. And some countries open the way for our brothers to work and get money. There are also countries which are suffering as we do from aggression, and troubles."

It seemed to Omar that we were discussing the events to elude ourselves, seeking for excuses for our deviations and failings. He was totally convinced that the nation was a whole which couldn't be divided; a solid integrated unity where food was for all Moslems; and men in every land, are members of one army even if there were differences in language, color, or the homeland was far. And the responsibility of any moslem governor towards the vanquished people of Palestine equals his responsibility towards any individual from his people. I muttered unconsciously while I was listening to the Caliph's words: "Dreams."

"What?"

"I beg your pardon; it's the bitter reality that leads me to hallucinate."

He shouted vehemently:
"Why to be desparate ? This is the reality of religion since ancient times and the guiding principle of the true experience in history. Look, you've been going through selfishness at the level of the individual, and state. Why don't you break free from these ties and blocks, and mix up, be brothers, and step on thorny wires which separate between you. Then dig up a tomb for every indication that separates you." I couldn't be silent. I elaborated out to him the countries which accepted Israel and exchanged with it trading, cultural and economic relationships; and were linked to it through friendship and mutual benefit. He said: "The de-

viation of the shepherd is caused by the parish-flock."

"The citizens can do nothing and they have no strength."

"How amazing! The shepherd, without his flock is worth nothing, and can't achieve any victory."

"The citizens, Caliph, are ordered, and they have to obey."

"And the ruler? Is he made from a stuff that's different from people's nature? Oh, once, a man stood up in the mosque and cried out: 'By God, if we see in you Omar, a crookedness, we will make it right by our swords.' And I thanked God because there were among the citizens, ones who could correct me by their swords. And yet, you speak of liberty, civilization, and progress in your age."

I said: "This thing took place in Omar's age."

He shouted vehemently: "But Omar is nothing."

"You were Islam walking on earth."

"The civilization of your age breeds distorted embryos."

I laughed gloomily and said: "And there are among us ones who try to create embryos in experimental tubes."

Every moment, Omar was discovering something new, either exciting or sometimes shameful. A look of gloom and agony appeared on his noble face. The thing that hurt him most, was when I discussed with him a thing that seemed to him so simple; and what made him sad mostly were our impotent and stumbling ideas with respect to the self-evident truth. He was always saying over, that we were deceived, that we called for principles through our mouths, not acting according to them, or letting spread inside our hearts and souls.

Then he withdrew suddenly from the stormy dialogue and said: "One of the prisoners, leaned towards me and said: 'The deposited trust is inside the cemetry, there, at the "Splendid Fence". I tried to grasp his words but I couldn't. I enquired about more elaboration, but he turned his face desparately. I said to myself that maybe he was hallucinating for what he went through from suffering and restlessness."

I stopped walking, and cried out in interest: "Did he say this truly?"

"You behave in a strange way. I only speak the truth."
"This is good news. We've been waiting for this message for a long time."
He said in astonishment: "Which message?"
"These are symbols which we know their meaning. We waited for the one who carried this message all this time, but it was useless. It appeared to us most likely that he was killed during the crossing over the fire line. God bless you Caliph."
Omar said, and on his face appeared the signs of curiousity: "I haven't understood yet."
"Our brothers outside, have sent us a quantity of weapons and hid them in the tomb in an area called: 'The Splendid Fence'. And we'll start going now there to bring it and begin the execution."
Omar smiled and said, filled up with joy: "You work, think and act cautiously. Put your trust in God and victory will be on your side." Then he turned to me suddenly and asked: "Are you one of the Commandos?"
I bowed down my head humbly, unable to speak. He embraced me with his mighty arm and held me towards him. Then he bent on my head, kissed me, and muttered smiling: "If they knew about this in prison, they would've separated your head from your body." The news shook me, as if I'd found out a treasure after searching and looking for it for so long. When I carry a weapon in my arms, I feel myself getting higher till I reach and embrace the clouds. I feel I'm free; and when I die over my arms, a happy, nice smile flutters around my mouth. The strength that is just and seeing through things, is a flow of dignity that can't be described; and a compensation for the honest fighters. And I started to utter some lines of poetry which I always liked to repeat:

"If I fell down
Then take my place you, my comrade in
the strife and take my weapon
fear not the sight of my blood
spilled with the weapon.
And look at my lips being tightly closed

above the rage of the storm
Look at my eyes closed with the morning light
I haven't died I'm still inviting you
from behind of wounds."

And all of a sudden, we saw in front of us, not knowing from where she had come, Rachel saying: "I was following you; I'm panting." some kind of impatience filled me and I shouted:

"What do you want?"

She pointed with her polished finger at the Caliph and said: "It's him I want."

Omar looked at her charming face which was covered with make-up and colors, and her flying golden hair. He closed his eyes when they fell on her semi-bared breast. Then he turned his whole face aside, noticing that her dress was above her knees and showing off her arms.

"Go away, you adultrous woman. What do you want?"

She said, while dancing as a naughty child:

"I've saved your life."

"I haven't committed a crime."

"It doesn't matter; lots of innocent people die, don't you know?"

"Then what?"

"I've liabled on a written paper for your security. Any mistake you do, or any suspect will be linked with you, I'll pay for it.

Consequently, it's inevitable that I should spend some time with you, for the sake of your security and mine too."

The Caliph said in surprise:

"We've escaped from one jailor's hands to another's."

She said: "I could possibly have left you to the dog hunters. No one could oblige me to testify and guarantee. Even Elie, violently opposed me, and I've deserted him for your sake."

Omar picked up a short stick and he hit her hard on the arm saying in a rage: "It's not proper to talk with men and you're almost naked."

She said in agitation: "What's wrong with that? A woman is absolutely right to reveal her charms." She shook her shoulders softly and said: "specially if she were beautiful."

She felt with her hand the spot where she was beaten and said in infatuation, putting her arms around his shoulders:

"Besides, I love you."

He pushed her violently, letting her fall down on the ground. She looked up at him while stretched down, with eyes sparkling with anger and rebellion and she shouted: "I can teach you an unforgettable lesson you bedouin the.."

A number of people gathered around; they were either surprised or curious, and Omar cried out: "I don't know what does this idiot want from me." The girl stood up abruptly, brushing the dust from her clothes, then she measured him up with her warning looks and left. People there, were asking questions and were wondering, while I was standing watching the interesting scene not knowing how to handle the matter. Then Omar prolonged his wide steps, dragging me by the arm, and we went on our way leaving behind us confusion and question marks.

"I hardly believe what I'm seeing." Omar said this, running fast being upset. I said: "It's a side of our world that is raging with wonders."

"I'm an old man, who reached his fifties. And she's young; she has thousands who are from her own race. Between me and her there is a gap of contradictory intellect and morals. A whole history separates us."

I said compassionately: "The movies and Romantic novels have made up many worlds of falseness and temptation."

"How?"

"I don't know how to explain it: A new fashion about the love of young girls for middle-aged and old men: Lolita and the poets of the fifteen year old girls, and Hollywood and Paris movies.. and thus we have the fashion of love and modelling. The play effects a generation; a frivolous tailor whom women pant after in order to dress up his peculiar innovations. How plentiful are the innovations of Europe and the Zionist traders."

Omar rubbed the palms of his hands together and said: "I haven't understood anything worth mentioning."

"She loves you, whatever the reason is."

"She wants to marry me?"

"Not marriage exactly."

"What is it then?"

"Friendship, an intimacy, a kind of a relationship between a man and a woman who wants him."

He exclaimed, putting his index finger on his mouth "A relationship! Between a man and a woman without a legal bond?"

"She wants to enjoy the right of marriage without being married."

Omar turned away his face and cried out: "God forbid; we've already buried that along with pre-Islamic times. Pre-Islamic paganism was more merciful: whoredom was hidden inside houses, but today it's in the streets; and law protects it. Your world names things, not in their own names. Why don't you say it's adultery and whoredom?"

I whispered shamefully: "Yes..."

"Corruption doth appear on land and sea because of (the evil) which men's hands have done..."

"These are their principles Caliph; a girl in our age, gives away a banquet in the honor of her boyfriend in her house, under the sight and hearing of her parents. There is no embarrassement to go with him in a trip or on a picnic. But, to tell the truth, lots of Moslems don't commit such sins."

Omar gave me a look of astonishment: "You're speaking in an amazing simplicity and strange calmness, without any outburst of blood in ycur veins. How much you lack the sacred ignition."

I shook my head saying: "sins are installed everywhere. Everyone has his own world, and there's no interference in the liberty of others."

Omar said: "What a diaster ! It's the liberty of corruption; and these miserable visions interfere in our freedom. They block our way spreading their efforts to drag from us the weak ones. It is a ruin of virtues, distracking people from normal, clean life. is there a more ugly assault against our liberty and others' liberty?"

Omar stopped walking and shouted as loud as he could, as if he were preaching in a public demonstration: "Let her freedom go to hell if it opposes the public benefit, poisoning the life of people, and rooting up sins among the people

of the nation."

It was strange and surprising! For I was hearing for the first time a valuable speech related to this matter; such words that I hadn't heard preached before above a dias, or read on the pages of a book. They were impressive, logical words, communicating with my soul and mind starting from the cause of liberty itself.

Omar snatched me away from my ideas by saying: "I believe in liberty because I believe in God. A woman, once, interrupted me in the mosque while I was trying to limit up the value of dowry, and she gave me the indisputable words of religion. She announced publicly: 'A woman is right and Omar is mistaken'."

Omar started to laugh bitterly and he said: "Your world is crazy; it accuses me of insanity. Under the shadow of the luxury of materialism you slide down to the bottom. What you've built by falseness is doomed to be ruined. Your irreligious education will pull away some day the castles of illusion and comfort. Your age is the disgrace of all ages; it's the poison of history.

We reached the house, fatigued, sad and the pain of whipping returning to me. My head was swimming from sleeplessness and the violence of events. A black taxi cab came on our way, and a woman dressed up in a wide black abaya descended, and on her head was a black thin shawl. She stood facing us and I shouted dazzled: "Rachel"!

Chapter 8

I looked at her up and down, with my confusing looks, trying with much effort to understand what she was after. Was there a secret she was keeping from us? Or did she have a definite aim she wanted to reach? Was her mere inclination toward the Sheikh, and her desire to play around, and her response to the teen-age illusions which were invaded by novels, movies and blue magazines? Was this the whole thing? Or was she a skillful spy, trying to expose the hidden mystery which she thought was behind the sheikh?

The thing that was amazing was her meeting with us in the beginning, came purely by chance; and if Omar was hiding an important secret, then he would have gone on in his way without opposing her or stirring this big scene which led us by force to our meeting with the police and our going through risky troubles. I was surprised when I heard her say: "Don't doubt me, for I've put on a proper dress. I know you're from the ones who are against women's make-up. Sheikh, you don't know to what extent you've stirred my curiousity. Alright, let's be friends; you've hit me twice and this is a strange thing. A woman who wants to discuss and understand.. is there something wrong in that?"

He cried out astonished: "How can you be sure about your safety being with a man who could be tempted by reckless wishes?"

"I trust you."

"And I refuse this suspected friendship."

"Does your religion order you to do this?"

"My religion orders me not to throw myself in the way of death, and not to approach uncertainties, and not to accompany the blower of bellows." She asked smiling: "The bellows blower?"

"Yes, don't you know? The blacksmith."

"My aim is knowledge."

"Omar laughed: "And does the insane person possess knowledge? That's what your kins have said."

"You've pretended that you're Omar Ben Al-Khattab."

"What's wrong in that?"

"We haven't known something like this; bones wear out and the container has been broken into pieces, and the content flew down, and fourteen centuries have passed; so how can life come back again?"

"As it happened to the cavemen and Al-Azaar and from what has Adam been created?"

"Adam.."

"God has the power to do anything, everything. Do you understand?"

"It's one of the fundamentals of ideologies. But people aren't honest in their belief in them. I'm a Jew, but I'm not a true believer."

He said, raising up his eyebrows surprised: "What do you mean?"

"I don't feel any tie of the religious ties. What I'm interested in, in the Old Testament is that it has responded with our political expectations concerning the homeland and salvation. And I don't believe in anything else." Rachel stared, stunned when Omar assured her that the Old Testament is true and that he believed in it and that the Bible is true but he didn't believe in it. And that there is neither Islam nor Faith without recognizing all the sacred Books, Messengers and Prophets, all of them. We don't differenciate between any of God's messengers. And he went on elaborating to her that the true religion to God is Islam; and that Islam bears the message of all the Messengers, from Adam to Mohammad. Then he stopped and said: "But where is the true Old Testament? Your Rabbis have lost it, then they shrank God's words and invented sayings that weren't revealed by God. "Therefore woe be unto those who

write the Scripture with their hands and then say. "This is from Allah"... Woe unto them for that their hands have written, and woe unto them for that they earn thereby." And neither is the Bible saved from being played with, and from the heretic tendencies of the deviators."

She was listening to him with awareness, grasping his words ardently. His great faith and emotion added to his words more power and effect. Comfort appeared on her face as she said: "We have been talking for a long time. And I'm searching for light, do you allow me to accompany you for some time?"

"With some limits."

"I've come to argue and learn."

"And I don't lock the door of knowledge and guidance in the face of any one."

She cried out honestly: "And be sure that I don't belong to any membership, Caliph. And when I feel spiritually and intellectually satisfied, I'll belong on the spot."

"I like frankness. I haven't hated anything in your ancestors but their deceit, dishonesty and lying."

"Let's leave judgement to time."

He thundered out in rage: "The only one who judges, is God alone. What are these rubbish expressions you're uttering?"

"I'm sorry, It's not easy to give up a deeply-rooted habit. Now, what do you say?"

"I agree"...

In fact I was much annoyed for the intrusion of this reckless girl in our life. I started to point out to the Caliph the risk lying in that, reminding him of her trifleness and her moodiness; that just for the fun of the experience had dazzled her, and the excitement lying in the situation, made her indulge where she doesn't belong. What she wanted, was to explore, to play around, and to get amuzement. But he pushed me away from him tenderly and said: "I don't fear but God. I haven't come to silence my words, or throw them in the dark. Let her have whatever she wants; Omar doesn't fear or isn't ashamed to say aloud what is right, even if their planes surrounded me from every side. And Omar won't be tempted by a lovely, Jewish woman. Her

ancestors had failed long ago, and I'll let her know what the taste of bitterness is. Righteousness in the mouth of many people tastes bitter; she may mock me and view me as an idiot and simple man. But I won't back off; this girl may think that she's deceiving me, she may go away in anytime not believing in anything I say. All this won't cause despair to creep into myself, and it won't prevent me from saying forth my word, come what may. The good word is like drops of rain: if this rain comes into a good land, then it gives out goodness and it outgrows. But if it rains on a swampy soil, it dampens the depths and goes through where God wants; or it might ascend as fresh breaths to the sky. But rain always falls, and from fertility comes life and immortal words are repeated everywhere and forever. It's time to pray, so depart from us now." And this is the way Omar talks...

* * *

Rachel came back to her house in New Jerusalem, her nerves tense, being restless and her face was flushed. She was thinking over the things that Omar had said, and kept on thinking about the comparing between her old achievements and what this man was saying. What was he talking about in fact was closer to her nature and more in harmony with herself. She grew more impatient when she found Elie waiting for her: "Why are you here for?"

"I haven't heard such words from you since we've come to know each other."

She said annoyed: "There are times when a person needs to be by himself."

He gave her a look of amazement and said:"What are these clothes you're wearing? Are they a new fashion from "Christian Dior"?"

She said sarcastically: "But these clothes cover up cheap innovations."

"What has happened to you Rachel? Are you tired?" She threw herself over a comfortable chair and supported her back against it, and put her arms on its sides. She said, while she stared up at the ceiling: "He looked sweet, sure of his words, flying up high in his ideas like a beastful

eagle; his movements and gestures melting me. He is simple with intelligence, humble with dignity; devoid from the complications of the age and its imperfections. I was going to throw myself on his wide chest, more than once to smell his scent. And I wished to be squeezed tightly held by his arms, and to cry ardently on his shoulder. But an invisible power was checking me, and paralyzing my moving on."

Elie tapped on the floor with his shoes and cried out in rage: "What is this hallucination?"

"I'm aware of what I'm saying."

"Your behaviour was always marked with eccentricity and strangeness."

"And you're inclined to be a dictator accusing who doesn't commit himself to your opinion with betrayal, dishonesty and ignorance. You're a secret service man by nature."

He said disgustingly: "I despise these silly, invisible inclinations."

"You're crushing my dreams with your foolishness, and you interfere in what is not your business."

"How?"

She said scoldingly: "I'm not your slave girl; what I have of yearnings and what belongs to me is mine only. You want to own me and monopolize my ideas. This is not love."

He knelt in front of her, and his humiliating implorings poured forth brokenly: "Darling, for God's sake, don't break our sweet dream for the sake of a temporary illusion, or a passing passion. Remember the good days, and the smell of barbecues and the drinking cups in the green, quiet plantations. And remember our immortal meeting at the temple, the day we've conquered Jerusalem and driven the Arabs out. We promised to marry each other, and we danced and sang in the Aksa court-yard, and we kept on drinking till we were drunk."

She pushed him disapprovingly, and said: "I've become disgusted with this memory.. it's over; I don't love you anymore. this is something outside my will. Why is the imploring? Or do you want to drag me by my hair to hell as you do with the condemned Arab girls?"

She became lost in her thoughts another time, and then

she went on saying: "Victory had a sweet taste then, but it didn't last. Everything passes quickly; I haven't found everlasting happiness yet. I'm still suffering from restlessness, worrying and frustration. The drums of victory give me a headache; I hate the jungle and the beasts.. I hate the jungle and the beasts. Oh, I've been constantly searching for something I don't know. Deep inside me, there is a never ending loss."

He said visciously and in defiance, getting up: "But I know, and you do know too. You want to drown yourself in a sea of untamable passion. You want that man at any price, and you'll be fed up with him after one night."

She turned her back to him, then she laughed nervously, and soon she turned around towards him again saying: "I wish he would accept me as a maid for him."

"This is all romantic rubbish.. I hate it, I hate it."

"You miserable man, you don't know what's going on inside me."

He laughed aloud in sarcasm: "A fiery desire.. in a hot body."

He swallowed and then said defiantly while he was sweating: "Well, I'll put an end to this illusion with a shot from my pistol."

"Would you kill him?"

"Yes, I can't stand this decline and foolishness for long."

She laughed aloud in tension, and said: "You won't do it."

"I have the full authority as a secret service man; and tricks won't fail me."

She said in a soft, formal voice: "And I'm assigned from your chief in the Intelligence Bureau, to know more about this man, and to look for his identification and his aim."

Paleness passed on all over his face and he asked: "Since when?"

"Today in the morning."

Then she said after being silent for a while: "And when necessary, I'll inform the head quarters that you're opposing my sacred assignment."

He said in perplexity: "So, you're under a formal mission."

"Maybe."

Anger appeared on his pale face. Inside him was an overwhelming conflict, which was depicted in his trembling, hands, and the oscillation of his eyes. But he controlled his anger and took a newspaper and a book which were his, and a gold chain with a small radio, then he left.

Chapter 9

"What are these papers?"

"Morning newspapers, Caliph. They're full of international and local news."

The Caliph looked closely at them, and passed quickly through their pictures and columns and I said: "On these pages, are the news of the world, east and west. You can find there the important event, or the international problem, or the scientific discovery, or the military conflict between one country and another; you find all the complete details in the same day."

The Caliph said: "It's strange; and on the same day?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"There are special agencies of news, where their reporters gather the news and send them back by radiogram, or radio and the Tiker machines in moments. In the newspapers there are sections in politics, Arts, Literature, Sciences and advertisements for commodities. Even crimes have specialists of their own, writing about them." He gazed up saying: "You sit down quietly in your house, and read all the news of the world while you're sipping a cup of coffee. What kind of magic has carried you with its wings to these open wide horizons? An invention like this melts barriers and border-lines; it mocks distances. This wouldn't have entered our mind. God's ability reaches everything; and yet you don't realize the importance of these blessings. If we had reached some of this limit, then nations would have knelt down thanking God. But you, in spite of these benefits, you blunder in sins and debauchery. You can use these as a

means to goodness and virtue, and you can make up from them vessels for women." He smiled in satisfaction while he said: "Your rocket or some of your planes take little time to fly between Mecca and Jerusalem. And you're wondering if the Messenger's nocturnal journey was bodily or spiritual. If I were in your place, I wouldn't have doubted the Messenger's nocturnal journey one bit in his soul and his body."

I took the newspaper, and started to read its headlines in a loud voice: "The leading countries haven't reached yet to a solution for the Middle East problem."

"Uthant declares that all the regional countries should abide by the security council decision."

"A clash between the Commandos men and Israeli Patrol in Upper Galilee and Jordanian Valley."

"Exchange of fire in the facing line in the Suez Canal."

"A great explosion in Jerusalem; one accused Arab claiming he's Omar Ben Al-Khattab."

And my heart started to beat quickly; there was a picture of the Caliph and me by his side. The thing had become known, and the story would be on everyone's tongue. The Caliph said: "Is this my picture? The one who painted it is clever."

"This picture has been made by a tiny machine."

"A solid tool?"

"Yes, and it works according to an accurate system."

"Isn't it liable to be damaged?"

"Of course."

While I was arguing the Caliph, I was gripped by anxiety and thinking: I heard him saying: "What have they written about me?"

I whispered shamefully: "The same silly things that were repeated by the Israeli Intelligence Bureau."

He shook his head saying: "They're accusing me of insanity."

"Let them say whatever they want. Truth will veil their eyes."

The thing didn't bother him much, but I felt afraid, for people would crowd over from every place to amuse themselves with the unheard of thing, and to look at the "mira-

cle". And this would surround us with curiosity from every place, hindering the Caliph from performing his duty. The Caliph called out: "If we had reached the same level as you've done in the field of earthly education, then it would have taken us not more than a few months to guide the world; and we would have held people's hands towards the right way. It seems that the leaders of the world today, don't make full use of the abilities which God has granted them. Instead, they drag you towards deviation, submissiveness and vanity. The power that's in your hands is a means to submit the poor ones. Luxury is sickening, due to overeating, and an illness. Freedom is whoredom and education is the appointment of selfishness as a ruler at the level of the individual and the state." Then he cried out: "Hasn't anyone in your age led education towards faith?"

I sighed in frustration: "That voice hasn't died down through the years."

"And the result?"

"As if we were hit by deafness."

"And how can words pass across the tumult, connatotion and the upraising of desires?

The whipping by which you tire out the backs of the innocent, in the prison, if you use it in whipping the whoring and deviation from truth, then your society would be purified from pestilences, and virtue would prevail in all places."

Omar bit on his teeth and a look of paleness was apparent on his face. His face was wet with sweating, and the muscles of his face contracted. Then he bowed a little to the front, putting his hands on the right side of his belly, and he murmured: "I'm not able to stand this pain any longer."

I jumped up from my seat and agitated asked: "What is the matter with you, Caliph?"

"It's as if I've gulped poison. Unbearable pains are squeezing me."

"It's inevitable that we visit a doctor."

He said in broken words: "We used to, during the Messenger's time, to drink some soaked herbs after boiling them, and soon the pain would disappear."

Omar mentioned some strange names of some herbs which I hadn't heard of before. I thought to have a look

over the linguistic dictionary which I had; but I tried to convince the Caliph that the doctor's visit was a must, and it won't take more than few minutes. And surely, I gave him an idea about medicine and its development in our age, and the fields of surgery, medicines, and the many specializations and the long years in which the doctor spends in order to get his license. It was obvious that the Caliph had a constant desire to know whatever was new, trying to explore the true nature of everything he saw. What he used to say frequently was that in order to give an opinion in any case, you must at first know everything about it, and imagine it as if you were living it. When we reached one of the Arab hospitals in Old Jerusalem, Omar leaned towards me asking: "Are there zionists among them?"

"No."

"Do you trust these doctors?"

"Thoroughly, and some of them are my friends." The Caliph sat down on the white, clean examination table; his eyes started to look around in the whole room which was air-conditioned. He watched the bright lights in the ceiling where there were the pure, neon bulbs; and he looked at the colored pictures which exposed the interior of man and the different systems of his body. His pupils widened in astonishment while he was seeing a full skeleton suspended in a corner of the room and he whispered: "Is it possible that this thing can happen?"

"It's a real skeleton."

"Whose is it?

"A creature of God's creatures."

He muttered in deep pain: "Everything has gone.. Flesh and skin have melted; the interior stuff has vanished and desire has died. There are no gatherings and no rebellion. Nothing is left but rotten bones which are immovable."

Then he started to ask God forgiveness, and said that there is no power and no strength save by God; then he continued: "As if it's a piece of wood which has been bared off from every bit of pride." And he muttered in misery: "You decorate your palaces with the bones of the dead!"

"God forbid. It's something to be learnt and studied." A slim girl entered, her skin was pure, her features lovely;

and her head was covered by a white cover. She was wearing a long and decent garment. Nothing was visible but a part of her neck and hands, and the lower part of her legs. And on her face, was a calm smile mingled with a mysterious sadness. She came close to Omar stretching her hand with the thermometer. He refused by protesting and asking: "Is this the doctor?"

"No, it's the nurse."

"What does she want from me?"

She said smiling: "It's inevitable to record the temperature, pulse and blood pressure."

And I interferred by saying: "That's the regulation to be followed. There is no way to protest against it."

"I can't take in everything you do. I must understand. Do you want to slow down my pain and accordingly to abuse my morals and dignity?"

It was inevitable to explain to him what was unknown and to convince him of what was going on. And soon, he opened his mouth, then closed his lips on the thermometer; and after his temperature was taken, he asked: "Why doesn't a man do this thing? Isn't it better for this girl to be responsible only for female patients?"

I said in astonishment: "Are women forbidden to do such work?"

"I don't mean that. Some of our women participated in battle and carried swords and bandaged wounds. But our women weren't like your women. You misuse licenses, and you bolt away from obligations."

The doctor came after a short time. He was silent; and if he smiled, it was by habit. So I said, in order to change the atmosphere of gloom and cheerlessness: "A doctor from Egypt."

Omar turned to him and asked: "Do you remember Amr Ben Al-Aas?"

The doctor smiled, then he roamed far away with his looks: "They were leading days in which rarely time may grant lavishly again."

The Caliph said reprovingly: "He had some flaws. It wouldn't have been fair without letting them pass without a rough punishment."

The doctor replied with a brief smile; then he started in the medical examination: sometimes putting the stethoscope on his chest and heart; and at other time, pressing with his hand on different areas of the belly. Then he went on asking some questions about eating, drinking and digestion, and the movement of the urinary system. He asked then about the first time the distrubances appeared, and their description complete, and accurate questions for everything. Then Omar muttered: "Have you recognized the disease?"

"Yes, but it is inevitable to proceed in lab tests connected with, urine - blood and excrements. And we might need an X-ray photograph." Omar smiled in spite of the pain and said: "I don't know the meaning of what you're talking about. But, you're quick in everything, except in reducing down the human being's pain."

The doctor stopped suddenly from examining him and looked for a long while at the Caliph's face and then he shouted: "I imagine that I've seen your picture today in the newspaper."

Omar shook his head laughing and said: "Yes, I'm the insane man of yesterday. It's a world of scandals."

The doctor said: "It is a falsehood which they accused you of. The Israeli newspapers are, in particular, fond of lies and exciting tales " The doctor was dumbfounded when he heard his patient saying: "What is strange in my being Omar?" The doctor looked him over with suspiscious looks;

"It's an extraordinary thing."

"Extraordinary, but it's possible. Haven't the Jews read something about the deceased person who was from the Israelites, and the Cow? What about Azir? Belief in God includes the unquestionable belief in his ability; and you're a scientist.."

The doctor whispered in perplexity: "Words of logic but it's hard for me to accept it."

"It's logical and convincing, yet you reject it?"

"This is the truth."

"A strange kind of faith."

"The only thing I believe in Sheikh, is that your mental powers are perfect."

The Caliph said, calmly and confidently: "And on what basis have you built this belief?"

"By observation, meditation, and the measures of science and logic."

"Oh my lad, you're fragmenting my words and then you pick up from them whatever you want. This is the mistake of partition. Where is the mutual understanding? Why don't you accept me or reject me as a whole?"

This was the way Omar talked..

The doctor said, delight appearing on his face: "Let's lessen your pains first. I believe that you're afflicted by the inflamation of vermiform appendix, and you need a surgical operation at once. This sickness, in old men, needs an immediate intervention."

My heart was pounding, and sudden confusion overwhelmed me: What would happen if the Caliph dies during the operation? The great event would vanish quickly, just like this, and any varied expectations would be aborted. What any agony I was going through! I asked: "Doctor, my friend, is there no replacement for the surgery?"

"I don't guarantee..."

Omar interrupted by saying: "pains don't bother me much. And as long as the thing is necessary, God's will is inescapable. I escape from God's will to God's will."

The doctor whispered: "You won't feel the least pain, you'll give in to a deep, calm sleep."

Chapter 10

The Caliph's presence in the hospital aroused a big clamor among the ones working there. Dr. Waheeb Abdallah commented by saying: "The story is interesting no doubt; but you're gentlemen, mentally confused. Superstitions fascinate you, you are participating in making up a silly illusion."

The surgeon who received him, Dr. Mahmoud Anani, said: "I can't either accept or reject the story. It needs studying and meditating. It is inevitable to proceed in some experiments and - observations to reach the truth in an irrefutable way."

Dr. Abdul Wahhab Al-Saadawi, an internal doctor known for his piety, said with confidence: "why what has happened isn't true? I know you Wahib, you are a dialectic materialist: Marx's theories and his disciples have smashed everything spiritual you believed in and they blotted out the bright side of your own world."

Abdulwahab rushed to the operation room as an idiot and a number of his colleagues together with some first-aid men, nurses, and attendants, servants males and females, all were after him. As soon as he reached the bed where the Caliph was sleeping, he bent over his legs kissing them, shedding tears over them, saying with deep emotion: "The beloved of God's Messenger: I've been always saying that we are in need of a man like you; of faith mingled with victory, of power associated with mercy, punishment perfumed by justice. You are the hope of the poor in the world of loss and suffering."

Omar straightened up in his bed and touched his fore-

head and hair gently saying: "You're the only doctor who believed in my existence here. Well, it's something that pleases my heart; but I don't see any reason for your kissing my feet. It's a kind of inslavery which I don't like. Come here.. wipe up your tears and raise your head high."

Then Omar held him to his chest saying: "Who are you and how have you arrived?"

"I am as you know, one of God's creatures troubled with perplexity for a long time. The road was rough, blazing with fire, suffering and anxiety. The mind was my only companion; I felt that I've missed a wonderful aspect that isn't reached except by devoted ones; the searchers after the light of truth. The maps were in my hands and I was going on and on till I fell fatigued, clinging to the sky, a sip of water! Where? I'd search for an evidence, but I wouldn't find it. I heard Him in the open land saying: "But he who turneth away from remembrance of Me, his will be a narrow life, and I shall bring him blind to the assembly on the Day of Resurrection". You've already known the way, son of Al-Khattab: The sight and the insight, the soul and the body, the mind and the emotion, the righteous presence in His perfection And from that day, I've been granted the delicious, sweet taste. My job has become a worship; and my prayer a direction towards God. My sleep became a virtue and my wakefulness is method. I've been searching for you for a long time and I know about you a lot."

Omar said, his feelings shimmering through:

"Have you known anything about my inadequacies, insubordination and remorse?"

"You've brought forth happiness in the world of the wretched people."

"I'm a human being, who isn't infallible. My dear one had raised me up, scolded me and forbidden me. I wasn't born a perfect man; my life was constant endeavor after the perfection that I hadn't reached; but I was happy while panting on the road in order to reach..."

The operation room was roaring with screaming and crying. Most of the people there, were male and female workers, and the ones responsible for bandaging. They bent over the Caliph crying and kissing his body and clothes, so

that his body was nearly hidden under their hands and heads. Dr. Waheeb shouted vehemently: "You fools, you've messed up with the sterilization and spoilt the order in the operation room. Are we in a hospital of mad people? If you don't leave at once, I'll intensify your punishment and call of the police to drive you out by force."

Then he pulled away the nurse Raja, the one who received Omar in the building. He reprimanded her by saying: "What are you doing? And why is the crying for?"

Omar looked at him fixedly for a while, and said, addressing the ones around him: "Make up for what you've spoilt, and go back to your work. Your brother is telling the truth, inviting you to cleanliness, order and sensibility. Disperse.. May God forgive both me and you."

Dr. Mahmoud was standing pale-faced; his forehead dripped with perspiration, his heart beating violently. And beside him, stood Raja, her eyes red, and her body trembling, while Waheeb's face was gloomy as he approached her, and he asked: "What's the matter with you?" she said: "I don't know.. It seems that I've loved this man. I heard him whisper amid the tin: 'Light up the torch of right with the oil of knowledge; moisten the heart with sweetness of certitude; extinguish the light of delusion by the breath of remorse and repentence. Start as when your mothers begot you: free and clean. And sing the magnificent tune: There is no other god but Him, Mohammad is His Messenger'."

Then she went on crying, in vain suppressing her emotions; and she muttered: "I can't control myself. His words have possessed me; how much I love these words."

Omar said, in a husky voice, overwhelmed with emotion: "My children, it's the time to eradicate the disease so that the pain will be over."

In moments, everything was quiet. Nothing was heard in the operation room except the buzzing of the boilers, and the sound of the metallic machines. The workers were moving in silence and serenity; hearts were beating with a darling, tender tune. After the Caliph was injected with the specific medicine, he stretched down calmly. He had strictly directed that his genitals be covered during the artificial sleep; and just before he woke up, when the operation was

over, he was talking unconsciously and saying: "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate: From the the slave of God Omar, the leader of the Faithful, to Al-Numan Ben Mukarran.. Peace on you; yet, I thank God whom there is no other god but Him. I was informed that many crowds of non-Arabs assembled to fight you in the city of Nahawand. If this message of mine is brought to you, then go by God's order and His help and victory, with the Moslems you are with. Let them not tread on a rough road in order not to get them hurt. And don't prevent them from their right, leaving them to be irreligious. Don't let them enter a jungle, for a Moslem man is dear to me more than one hundred thousand dinars. Go forward till you reach "Mah", and I've sent a message to the people of Kufa to meet you there. So if your troops are assembled, go ahead to where is Al-Fairazah and the ones he has gathered there from non-Arabs of the Persians and others, and Peace on you.'

Oh, it's my big responsibility. I want the leaders to write me everything, describing everything about the battle-field and its nature. I want to be as if I were living among them. Oh, woe unto you Omar, you've left with a heavy burden. How would you answer your God when you meet Him; Ah! Saad, don't let what is said about your being the uncle of God's Messenger and his friend, delude you into believing that you'll be favoured by God. The Mighty and the Revered doesn't erase sins, but the sin is erased if followed by a good deed. The only lineage between God and any man is through his obedience. People, if they're either noble or inferior, are all equal in Islam. The best of them are those who are the truest in faith and they achieve God's blessing through their obedience. Take the Prophet as your example, for you can look back and abide to whatever the Prophet had committed himself to. You must resort to Patience." The anaesthetic commented saying: "He's nearly awake."

Abd Al-Wahab Al-Saadawi, who was covering the most part of his face behind the white mask, nothing was shown but his tearful eyes, said: "These are messages mentioned as they're written in the historical books: a message to Al-

Numan, and another to Saad. Look, he was arranging the military plan for those who were fighting in Persia while he was staying in Al-Medina.. Avoid the mountain, go down towards the east and be ready to cross the river at time so and so.. He was living the battle with his mind and heart. I wish he keeps on talking for hours and hours. Haven't you heard how he addressed his men and how he adviced the uncle of the Messenger?"

* * *

It was a memorable day: everybody in the hospital ran up to the patient's room; and the news went over everywhere. People ignored what they've read in the newspapers, and one of them said: "Newspapers don't tell the truth always. Israel wants to tread on any light shining in the Moslems' world."

Thousands of people advanced towards the Arab Hospital. It was necessary to safeguard order by placing a sufficient number of forces from the police and security men there, in order that circumstances won't be taken advantage of, or that chaos wouldn't be uncontrollable, or the destroyers would sneak out and hostile demonstrations would break out. Many of the ones who were able to pay more, or to get in by one means or another, could get a glimpse at the "patient". The streets and the near areas had changed to beehives; and the day was connected with the night, for the movement was constant, and the tumult didn't diminish. The Israeli policemen were obliged sometimes especially near the main-gate of the hospital, to shoot in the air to scare people, trying to separate the frightning crowds which were threatening to be dangerous.

The editors of newspapers took advantage of this situation, and contacted some of the workers in the hospital taking from them some newspaper reports. Some of them were paid for, but most of them were free, for the ones who gave these reports didn't accept any reward. On the next day, newspapers appeared, full of many articles about the important topic.

Men of religion, psychologists, and security men gave out their opinions. One of the official, learned religious men

from the Moslems, said: "There is no text connected with this thing in the speeches of the Messenger of God. The theologians, however they were different in their sects or inclinations, haven't mentioned this case. Besides, the age of miracles was over long time ago. But, from time to time, a man appears claiming prophecy, or that he's the waited for Al-Mahdi; or he assures that he's one of the devout men whom God has sent again to guide people. These are all of them, innovations and a fib that God doesn't approve of. They might be suspected of being blasphemous, God forbid. God save us from being irreligious." A doctor, who was a member of the Israeli Workers party, and specialized in psychology said: "I don't find the least difficulty to determine this case. I've seen thousand cases like this in neurogical and psychological institutions. One may claim that he's Napoleon; another may believe that he's Hitler, the leader of Nazism. To cure such a case, is possible, for I've seen a lot of such cases been cured thoroughly."

On the other side, the Head of the Israeli Intelligence Bureau had declared:

"What I'm concerned with, is the security of the state. I don't protest against the opinion of the religious men or the psychologists; but I doubt that behind this man is a worked for plan. To be careful is a must, for he might be one of the agents or dangerous spies. We had intended to arrest him; but now that he's known and exposed, there's no reason to fear him."

A man from the street muttered: "God is able to do anything. We can't be absolutely certain, that he's a liar or mentally ill, or being an agent to a party. This is mere guessing. Besides, there's no reason why he isn't a good man, or is being Omar in his body and soul!" Dr. Waheeb insisted on his opinion and analysis when he said: "He might be a man who has gone far in Sufism; and his admiration for Omar was too much, so that it came into his mind that he is Omar.

I have my particular opinion about Omar too: No doubt that he is a prominent leftist in Islam and so was his comrade Abu Thar. It's important to acknowledge this. If we go over the think about the Islamic history, and the evaluation

of its men, compared to the modern age; and in spite of the extreme metaphysics of Omar and others; yet, his leftism was a changing point in the economic and social structure at that time. Omar believed in the people and their just struggle for survival. It's possible to have a turn for it in our age, represented in the wishes of the proletariat and its progressive, revolutionary expectations, and their right in seizing the power of the state. Omar wasn't able to declare openly his opinion about the ideological structure of the ancient state, and that was due to the intensity of the overwhelming, metaphysical power. Briefly, Omar was a link of the chain of the heroic struggle of the working-class. Even though his policy and behaviour were mingled with a bourgeois tendency; in reality, as it seems to me, that he wasn't satisfied with this tendency but for flattering the people who were unmerciful."

The surgeon, Dr. Mahmoud Al-Anani went on with his reticence: "I don't want to rush in giving my opinion. Let's wait a little; the last word will be decisive and dangerous. Besides, it's inevitable that it should be preceded by meditation, reflection and thorough examination."

Dr. Abd Al-Wahab Al-Saadawi called out when the editor asked him: "Death is true, and resurrection is true. There isn't a believer, regardless of his religion, who can't deny the ability of God. God is able to do anything."

The nurse, Raja, stated: "I've seen the light of faith on his face. I've read honesty in his eyes, and I've listened to the faithfulness, and belief through his words. His soul was touching and hovering above us. I 've believed in his honesty and I've never seen anyone like him before."

The thing which the newspapers were interested in much, and which they gave much care and thorough investigation, was Rachel's story with the Caliph. One newspaper wrote down the whole story in a complete page, adorned with a number of pictures. There was a picture of Rachel in her old short mini dress; then another one of hers in a cloak-like wrap and the black, thin shawl.

There was also a cunning photo of her ex-boyfriend Elie, in which he looked gloomy and miserable because of defeat. At last, there was a big photo of Omar written on it:

"The knight of dreams" accompanied by an accurate detailed story of Rachel and the Caliph, besides some additional stuff and exaggerations which were devoid of truth. There were also false speeches that were copied by the news agencies and considered to be as the most interesting event of the year. Letters poured down from everywhere, asking earnestly about the Caliph; and even a lot of people from European countries have booked seats in planes going to Israel.

I was watching these things, barely believing my eyes, and ears. Was I in a world of imagination? Or in the world of reality? I was confused, and felt dizzy as if I were going to faint.

Chapter 11

Rachel reached the hospital, surrounded by a group of guards. She was wearing black glasses, and holding in her right hand a white handkerchief. Her nose tip appeared reddish. Flashing cameras and their lights followed her, surprising her from every side; and the T.V. lens whizzing aloud. Under her left armpit, she carried a big box of cardboard on which was drawn a portrait of one of the female leading movie stars. Policemen were ordered, as it appeared to me, to facilitate her mission, fulfilling her demands without any argument. The Caliph noticed, in his room, many newly added things: Some new electric bulbs, a radio and a T.V. Before Rachel entered, I leaned towards the Caliph and whispered in his ear: "Be careful."

"What do you mean?"

"Any movement expressed by you, might be seen by the people outside; and any word could be heard by them."

He fidgeted with his hands saying: "The room is closed, and its windows are firmly closed. Its walls are thick."

"I'm afraid that there are hidden lenses in the room to transmit the picture and also there are loudspeakers too."

The Caliph muttered: "Are they Suleiman's jin?" "They are the most recent American inventions that reach Israel." And I went on explaining simply how the sound, recording machines were working and how pictures were taken secretly. The Caliph was listening to me in interest, and then he muttered breathlessly: "I feel your world is a great prison." Then he continued: "Anyway, I don't have anything to be afraid of, to say aloud. On the contrary, it is the opposite of what they're imagining. I want to be heard by the greatest

number of people. But no doubt that earsdropping is an unforgivable crime."

The commander of the Faithful was stretching on his bed; his face pale; a strange kind of light coming out from his features and looks, inspiring confidence, security and faith. He was saying over from time to time, some implorings that were repeated by the Messenger of God, and muttering some sentences from the Glorious Koran. He didn't miss any prayer, for he was praying while reclining on the bed. When Rachel entered, she had already taken off from her eyes the black glasses; and she put the box on a small table. Then she bent over the feet of the Caliph, and started to cry aloud. Omar closed his eyes for a while, then he said firmly: "You may sit down quietly and lower the shawl over your face."

She said sadly: "How much I suffered for what you've been going through.'

"This is God's will girl. It is possible that some benefit might come out of this."

She said: "Your sickness aroused an overwhelming upheaval of anxiety among people."

He replied in astonishment: "Why? Thousands of people get sick; they even die daily, and the hospital is full of different kinds of patients. So, why to be worried about me in particular?"

"You're not an ordinary human being."

He said reprovingly: "I'm a man from God's creatures. There's hardly a thing that makes me different from them."

"People have nothing to talk about, but yourself." He shook his head in surprise: "A new innovation." He sighed, then, sadly and said: "My dearest one, the Messenger of God, has said when he saw a bedouin trembling in front of him out of fear and aw: take it easy; I'm the son of a woman who used to eat dried, cut meat in Mecca."

The words moved her and she continued: "Your humbleness renders you more sublime." "I hate deceit, and I'm annoyed with these words."

She felt as if she was dumbed all over her body. Her head was overwhelmed with desire and she leaned towards him whispering: "May I kiss you?" He pushed her roughly

away; his face was changed, but she came closer to him and was sobered by a powerful slap on her face.

"Leave this room at once."

"Have mercy on me."

"To be merciful, is not the same as responding to the tyrannical passions. The devil has taken power over you."

Her tears fell down over her face again. She was feeling badly hurt and greatly disappointed. "You know that I love you, and that I've left everything for your sake."

"You behave and think as a thoughtless girl does. There is still a long, far distance between us."

"But you're closer to me than any man in life."

"A filthy, selfish girl.." Then he continued: "You're chanting with liberty, and when I practice my right in rejecting, you're mad. You should understand for the last time: Man and woman don't meet except by a divine order which God has legislated. And everything that goes on between a man and a woman outside this law, is a disobedience and a straying from truth. Get up, or I'll throw you out to the street."

She stretched out her hands imploring: "I wish you'd do it.. slap me again."

"This is madness."

"Your punishment is a bliss, where in its range I feel I'm adoring the pains you're afflicting upon me. You're the most magnificent man I've seen."

The Caliph turned towards me saying: "Where has she selected these daring, strange words from?"

I went near her, agitated and shouted: "You want a new material to defame the man, isn't it?"

"You're unfair to me comrade."

"I'm facing you with the bitter reality; in spite of the spears that are protecting you."

She said, reaching out her hands entreatingly: "I haven't done such a thing. The damned Elie is the one who said bad things about us, out of jealousy and envy, you know Elie, comrade."

Omar inquired about what I meant, and I told him about what the newspapers had written about him and her. He was

well aware that the purpose of all this was his defamation, and to do harm to his honesty, so that people would leave him and men of knowledge would denounce him, and common people won't follow or trust him. Omar waved his hand in anger and said: "This is a crime which the religious law punishes. How can they accuse a girl like her of this charge? And how can they accuse me of what I haven't committed ? There is an insinuation, between the lines, that something horrible and dishonorouble has been done. It is impossible that anything like this has been done by me." I continued defiantly: "She is responsible for this, Caliph."

He looked at her reprovingly: "How can you betray the entrust and participate in inventing lies?"

"It is done by someone who hates both me and you."

Omar was silent for a while, both perplexity and contemplation appearing on his face. "Maybe she is unjustly treated, youngster."

"She is trifling with us and double-crossing us, Caliph."

The Caliph looked at her, and said, controlling his emotion: "Our religion, girl, calls for distinguishing between right and wrong, and to be fair when a legal judgment is issued. I don't have now the power which imposes God's punishment; but I own something else, and that is to reject in going on in the caravan of deceit."

She started to cry and shudder; and through her tears swearing that she was innocent, and assuring that she couldn't live away from the Caliph after that day; she would follow him wherever he would go, and she would cling to his clothes' hem in spite of what would happen. And when she would be desparate, she won't stay in this world for one moment. She would then leave this world: its people and everything else in it. She, Then supplicated to God in grievance. It seemed that the Caliph's heart softened towards her, and that enraged me more.

The Caliph asked: "Why do you love me?"

She whispered, staring blankly: "Most often man doesn't know the real reason that is hidden in love."

He shouted vehemently: "This is blindness."

She said, the tone of her voice expressing honesty: "You're different from others."

"An interesting thing? Eh?"

"They've lied. I don't amuse myself with an interesting incident, believe me."

"What is it then?"

She answered: "You're a man who is honest and who believes; you don't fear anyone."

"Except Allah.."

"Yes, you've come being far above any low, earthly purpose."

The Caliph said looking at the very white lit ceiling of the room: "You're coming closer. My heart doesn't lie. The ones who adore just the appearance, are shallow. And the ones who adore the materialistic power, giving in to it are weak.And the ones who subjugate themselves in the temple of perishing pleasures, are polytheists or pagans. When you adore Righteousness, Goodness, and Beauty as an aspect of the whole that lies in the Divine perfection, When these three ideals are found in one of the creatures of God - then you'll be with the sublime man." Then he turned to her asking: "Do you believe in God?"

"I believe in Him now."

"Why?"

"For I've seen your faith reflected in you with Righteousness, Goodness and Beauty."

"Do you believe in the great Example: Mohammad? "

"Yes, because you believe in him."

He cried out irritably: "Me? Who am I? Say, I believe in him because what he calls for is right."

She bowed down her head submissively and repeated: "I believe in him because he calls for what is right."

"No one of you shall believe except when Allah and His Messenger are dearer to him preferably than others."

"I've believed.."

He turned back to look at the white, lit ceiling: "It costs you much, to believe, girl. The least thing you should do is to die for God's sake. You must liberate your faith from the earthly, selfish interests and the passing, short-lived objects. To be free from the passions and fighting them is the greatest battle, as my dear, the Messenger of God has said. Love, in this case, is put in a new light: If the believer loves

someone, he loves him for the sake of God. And if he hates him, it is because of God also. This is an important quality of a Moslem."

She murmured, her head bowed down: "I've loved you for God's sake, and for our mutual aim which is our belief in God."

"Then you are able to live in a world of happiness, in which your heart hasn't known before. And the visible love becomes worship; the bohemian lust changes to a clean, human relationship full of pleasures. Its name is marriage. The garment that you wear will be a dignity and a shelter. You'll see the naked deviators, as a cattle of lost animals. They're far from being the kind of man whom God has honored. Say with me Rachel: "I acknowledge that there is no god but Allah, and that Mohammad is Allah's Messenger."

This was the way in which Omar was talking. I was unable to believe what my eyes were seeing, or my ears were hearing while Rachel was quoting the Doctrinal formula in an undoubtful honesty. I noticed the satisfaction and pleasure crowning the face of the Caliph. But, on the next day, I felt depressed, because a newspaper found out about Rachel and her becoming a Moslem. It published this on the first page, and one of the newsman commentators wrote down: "This impostor is carrying the seeds of rebel and corruption to our generation. This generation, was born amid fire, blood and long suffering. He is a dangerous riot which should be eradicated before things get out of our hands. I suggest to the general military governor, to drive him out of Jerusalem as soon as he is recovered. I don't have the least doubt that this man conspires and aims to destroy our youthful country from inside, after the failure of the enemies to destroy it from outside. He'll gather Moslems against us and will tempt the non-Moslem, of Christians and Jews. He has a supernatural power to impress his victims. He takes advantage of the spiritual emptiness, and fills the rising generation with attractive illusions." The Rabbi issued an order to drive Rachel out from the spiritual paradise of Israel; and he entrusted to deprive her of her civil rights. Besides, an official, Moslem learned man, burst

out laughing and said: "You can't guide whom you love, but Allah guides whom He wants..' I've lived all my life as a writer of books, as a preacher and a deliverer of lectures; yet, not even an individual has become a Moslem because of me. It's God's command"..

The schools, universities, sport and educational clubs, public libraries and some small parties, have all competitioned in inviting the Caliph for holding public meetings in which prominant thinkers and people in general participate too. There would be discussions about intellectual matters in general, and various religious topics in particular.

In private, where there is silence, and invisible movements, Rachel was suffering from an urgent matter: the head of the intelligence Bureau had called her to his office, the evening of the next day, and discussed with her everything that was recorded in the Caliph's room!

"So, either you are a clever actress who played her role perfectly well; or the man may have fooled you and convinced you of his rubbish. You wanted to hunt him, so he hunted you." Rachel started to laugh aloud tensely and said: "Even you doubt it? He hasn't touched my body till now but by his stick and slaps. Between me and him stand thousands of miles. It is inevitable that the road should be shortened, and the obstacles removed to reach our aim. And that is achieved by the trust that he has in me. I know how to do my duty for the sake of Great Israel. It is impossible for Rachel to betray the strife of successive generations for Zionism's sake. The Caliph believes that he has possessed me. I am the one who'll possess him. Then, at that time, the big lie will be naked and the face of truth will be revealed."

Her face was full of happiness as she raised up her hand shouting: "Long live Great Israel. Death for Moslems."

The Head of the Intelligence Bureau said, and a touch of reassurance appearing on his face: "What do you think of the man?"

"A strong, mature, attractive personality."

"I mean, what do you think he's after to?"

"Ah! His true aim isn't clear to me yet. He claims to call for the invocation for God alone. He wants people to go

back to Islam and its principles again; for through it lies happiness and salvation. I think that to kill him is a foolish act, because it won't untie the mystery that's surrounding the man. There is no fear of what he is calling for, for it would be blown away by the wind, and the same thing has happened to previous claims. We must be patient; that's the only way to uncover his mysterious scheme."

Then she swallowed hard and then said: "But you must send Elie away from my way, or he would mess up everything. Jealousy may drive him to act rashly, and so we'd lose a lot." He whispered: "Be assured about this. We are watching everything. If we see it is necessary to arrest Elie, we would arrest him at once. We won't allow any individual, whatever his position is to stand in our way."

* * *

Rachel didn't find rest even in her house. The phone was always ringing; newsmen reporters were surrounding her and following her wherever she went. The looks of the passers by who knew her, were confusing her movements and burdening her heart. The sellers gave her what she wanted freely, without any payment. Advertising companies sent her a lot of gifts; and some of them wanted to make use of her picture in advertisements, in exchange of a generous reward. Rachel came to her father complaining: "These journalists are horrible and disgusting."

The father winked with his left eye saying: "You can take advantage of the situation."

"How?"

"Don't give them anything freely."

"But I don't want."

He said in anger: "They'll write from their sheer imagination."

Her mother interferred by saying: "I think that Rachel should write her biography and sell it to leading newspapers: and from this she'll gain much."

Rachel said: "But Elie will get mad."

Her father shouted: "Let him go to hell."

"Haven't you agreed on my marrying him and insisted on that?"

He answered disapprovingly: "Me? I don't remember that."

Rachel turned to her mother for confirmation, and the mother said: "Elie isn't suitable anymore. He can find tens other than you."

"What about his great future? and his great influence? and good looks? Have you too forgotten mother?"

Her mother roared at her saying: "Briefly, Elie isn't good enough for you anymore. Consider now writing your biography. It'll yield for us so much money soon. Be sensible and take this opportunity that might not occur again."

Rachel said firmly: "I'm not thinking of any such thing now."

Her father caught her arm and twisted it violently saying: "Do you want to lose the golden opportunity you fool?"

Her mother gave her harsh, angry looks, and Rachel thought: What would she say? The secret service men wanted to suck her up; her family intended to use her; Elie desired her body as a beast; and journalism was making her life restless, in order to please the public, and raise up distribution of copies. The world is selfish, greedy and seeming as a big market for slaves... It is a stock exchange; it is something that hurts. She whispered shrewdly: "Wait you two.. I'll take care of this thing in a way that pleases you."

Her father said: "Before it gets too late. Our apartment is slummy and isn't suitable for us. The street we live in, is narrow and crowded with dirty, eastern Jews. I am dreaming of a refined quarter, and a big house surrounded by a garden and flowers. I'm dreaming also of a great sum of money in the bank and great trading projects." Her mother looked through the opened window, raising up the wan colored curtain and said: "When you write your biography, Rachel, the newspapers will take them over, and publishing companies will pant after you; and so will the establishments of motion pictures, the theatre and translation companies that translate to foreign languages. Your name will rise high to the sky. And you'll be the most famous woman in our days."

Her mother stopped talking suddenly and said: "Can't you marry him? Even if for a short time? If this is possible,

then you'll reach the peak and we'll walk on a carpet of gold."

The father shook his head and said: "This illusion must be lived. This man is a precious treasure."

Rachel said distractedly: "The problem is that he isn't aware of me as a woman."

The mother said: "Be patient my daughter. Don't be eager for him than is necessary. Be indifferent to him and he'll come back kneeling down, imploring and urgently will be asking for you."

Rachel asked: "Do you think that this method will work?"

"Sure.. He's a man."

"I know, but he's a unique kind of men."

"Try girl and you won't lose anything."

Rachel whispered absentmindedly: "Haven't you tried to stand at the bottom of a high mountain. Its height is embracing the far-away clouds? Haven't you thought of climbing that mountain? It is something beyond thinking and imagination."

Her father said sarcastically: "A helicopter may carry you to the top in moments, but you aren't looking for a means."

Rachel gave him back an equally sarcastic speech by saying: "All technological and military measures in this case - fail completely. I won't reach Omar in this way even if I go over a nuclear rocket. This is another world which you don't know its nature." She yawned, while she sat on the seat, then she fell soundly asleep although her mother and father were still talking on.

Chapter 12

There were more and more troubles till things reached the extreme; and the news of the Caliph moved heaven and earth. I didn't know how the occupation forces would deal with him, and how could Omar confront the viciousness and cunning of this world; for he was the kind-hearted, brave man. I went on to call the ones whom I could trust, to discuss this matter with them. Some of them thought that I'd better withdraw from this uproar thoroughly to save myself from troubles. And some were advising us to devise a well-structured plan for the escape of the Caliph, so that he would enter an Islamic or Arab country; and there he might find the fertile soil for his religious mission, and the suitable atmosphere for his ideas, and for saving his life. Some friends wondered about the coming of Omar especially to Jerusalem while it was under the Israeli occupation and full of troubles and gloomy unrest!

I thought of visiting one of the official, learned Moslems in his house, so that I could go over this thing with him. Maybe, whatever was published in newspapers through him, might be untrue. I took care to conceal my visit. When the man saw me, he welcomed me and started to ask me about everything related to the Caliph. But I didn't miss the the coolness and fear which were intermixing his words and behaviour up. I'd explained to him the whole story from its beginning till that moment. At the end, I said: "I'm afraid that the Caliph will be killed and be a victim of a Jewish plot."

The sheikh replied: "If he is supported by God, then he won't be hurt. Even if people of earth and heaven whether

humans or demons, gathered against him, and wanted to harm him in anything, they won't harm him but in something that God has ordained." I noticed in his words, a lot of mockery and I said: "This is a negative attitude which is not proper. The Messenger was supported by God, but he used to prepare and evaluate everything in peace or war time."

He shouted in my face vehemently: "What do you want from me? Do you want me to go to a man whose identity is unknown, and kiss his hands and feet as the common people do? What would my position be with respect to the Israeli authorities? They'll accuse me of participating in arranging a conspiracy with the mysterious new comer to create disturbancies. And I'm here responsible for my family, children and money. Your welfare is here, and it is for the sake of religion that Omar should go back to where he has come from."

I said stunned: "You're discussing the matter in a strange way."

"Not strange, but practical."

"He has come to recite God's words. He has come to call sleeping people and deviators, and to fight the new paganism."

The Sheikh's face was gloomy and he said: "What about us? We're carrying the message interpreting the Koran, and teaching people their religion. Is it possible that any man may add something new? Paganism had been crushed down by Mohammad and it won't come back again." What would I say to the Sheikh? Could I say that Omar was talking in a way that was different from theirs? And that his words, feelings and behaviour were one unit? And that out from his faith could emerge a bewitching power that could change and resurrect things? And that his world was free from fear, blasphemy, deceit and despair? And that the Moslems' situation today, gives the evidence that this Sheikh and the ones like him have failed, and they're confirming the features of malignant kind of paganism that masks itself behind education, materialistic progression, and the victory of modern thinking with its tricks and apprehensions and deceit? But I wanted to resort to patience, for if I could un-

ite the Sheikh and the Caliph, then we might reach a satisfying solution, and I'm implored by saying: "What do you think if you meet him?"

"Me?" He said in astonishment.

I said back: "Why not?"

"I don't believe in the matter from its basis."

"Come with me and be sure."

"There is no necessity for that."

I was unable to suppress my rage, and I said: "A man from the best, who has come to say his word and you refuse to hear it? By God, if they asked you to go out and greet the Israeli War Minister, you'd wear your best clothes, and you'd run to the meeting place, and on your lips a broad smile; you'd stay for hours listening to his words and shake your head thankfully."

He was almost burning me with his looks, but he controlled himself and shouted: "You are a deluded fool. It I cooperated with that man, I'd lose the ground I'm standing on, in order to defend your religion and honor. And if it was discovered that Omar isn't here today, we'd lose, and Islam would lose a lot. I've known much of the education of our religion, and I don't need more."

I waved my hand in rage and cried out: "Religion is not a number of books which you memorize by heart. We're dead; we've lost everything, religion and life. Millions of us have knelt down in humiliation, imploring for the withdrawal of the small state. In spite of our thorough knowledge of all religious sciences, the reality is the strongest slap on the face of our vanity and claims. You're hired; you're followers of theirs, and not religious men."

The Sheikh pointed with his shaking index finger towards the door saying: "If you don't leave, I'll call the police."

I looked at his fully-flushed face, and the sparks of wrath that were in his eyes. His chest was going up and down and I said: "Do you believe in God?" His shaky finger remained pointing at the door while he didn't utter a word; and I continued: "If you believe in Him, then you have to believe in His Ability."

His compressed face was still the same; and kept on looking at me sharply.

"And it's not far from reality if God sends back Omar."

And I started to go and said: "You always fall behind. You get in the end of the procession. You adopt any new motto, and you cover it with worn clothes which you call religion. You do well in the field of false interpretation of the Koran to get the approval of rulers. You're in the end always. But the common people in the streets will be pleased. They'll grasp the truth and will drink its nectar without any dexterity. They won't fear death. Omar's appearance is a danger for Israel, but it is more dangerous for your world that is full of lies, fear and deceit. And that's why you hate his appearance."

When I reached the door, I heard him snarling in a stormy rage: "The Israeli bombers can crush these people in five minutes, sweeping with them superstitions. We are in no need of a new Omar. But we are in need of a transaction of arms."

I said, while I was shutting the door between me and him "We used to have weapons and we left them piled up in the field; have you forgotten?"

His words annoyed me, arms alone don't add anything new. And the trained men won't change things except when their hearts are full of principles. We care for arms more than the carrier of arms.. What would I say?

I kept on walking on the highway, as if I was going through a disturbing nightmare. I opened my eyes to see Dr. Abd Alwahab Al-Saadawi buying some newspapers. And he had told me that he was occupied with studying the Caliph's life. He said that there were important issues he wanted to ask him about: Why did he - for example - disagree with Khalid and dismiss him? And how did he object to the Hudaibiah peace treaty, although the Messenger had set it up? And the circumstances that surrounded his assassination? etc..

I said: "Dr. these aren't important issues. What is important now, is the safety of the Caliph and his protection, and to let him achieve his duty. People are confused, and the Israelites, no doubt, are planning for a conspiracy. I don't trust this Rachel. Events shouldn't outstrip us."

Abd Al-Wahab said, self-assured: "Omar knows what should be done."
"He doesn't have any previous knowledge of new malicious maneuvers."
"No my friend; the one who believes, sees by the light of God. Omar has come, neither to be protected by us, nor to lead an army and plan for a quick military attack. He has come to guide us, so that we'll walk by the guidance of God. He has come like an electric shock which shakes the patient's head and body, so he shudders all over, than he regains his consciousness, and thus both fear and sickness are gone.
It is like the whistle of safety, that urges people to go out from the darkness of pitches and caves to light and life. Our role now is directed on grasping his words, and afterwards we'll plunge in the great rebel and we'll fight what's falsehood and surrender. It is a battle for the sake of God." Abd Al-Washab's words gave me much comfort, and brought into my heart much of reassurement and hope. I whispered: "Do you have the least doubt that he's Omar?"
His features brightened up with joy and faith; and he said: "My mind and heart have responded to him. His belief is stronger than any doubt. His intellect is a wide, pure world. If he isn't Omar in body, he is Omar in his heart, soul, intellect and behaviour. A human being isn't made up of blood, bones and flesh only, because this is the animal structure in him and all people share this structure. But what distinguishes one man and the other, is the mind, soul, and behaviour. Do you understand me? He is Omar and I don't have the least doubt in that." I sighed out of grief; then I explained to him what had happened between me and that sheikh and I said: "I wish the Moslems' sheikh would understand the matter like you."
Abd Al-Wahab started to move his head right and left and said: "The Messenger's religious mission went on in the tough road. It wasn't detained by the hatred of Abu Jahl, or by the enmity of Abu Sufyan. Neither its power or strength was shaken by hypocrites, or by claims of the Jewish rabbis. Omar, along with Bilal, Salman, Suheib and hundreds of the creatures of God from among the poor or the

slaves, went on. They made up with the help of God, the greatest event in the history of man: "My creature, obey Me, and you'll be sublime. You'll say to the thing "Be" and it will Be."

I didn't know from where did Dr. Waheeb Abdallah come, for he surprised us from the back and put a hand on my shoulder and the other hand on Dr. Abdal-Wahab's shoulder, then he said sarcastically: "For sure, you're talking about a superstitious topic."

"Every Marxist is an atheist, I swear by the God of Al-Kaaba."

In this way talked Abd Al-Wahab; and Waheeb said in contempt: "You've drowned people in a new frenzy. Never mind, it's a kind of a drug to soothe down our pains. No doubt it is interesting; and a more interesting idea has occured to me: what do you think if we presented to the Caliph the Philosophy of Marx, Engels and Lenin. He seems to be broad-minded, and he might accept this philosophy. And if this happens, then it would be a blow that would touch the right wing deeply."

Abd Al-Wahab pushed him on his chest and said being outraged: "Ridiculous nonesense. You miss a lot of good manners and politeness."

Waheeb shrugged his shoulders, head and said: "IThis is my opinion. The man doesn't object in discussing anything."

Then AbdAl-Wahab turned to Waheeb and asked: "How have the people in Russia become Marxists?"

He said calmly: "An inevitable, historical progression."

"According to Marx, inevitable progression was to start in the industrial society of Europe. But that didn't happen."

"This is a minor problem."

"Let me correct for you: A minority of weapon-carriers has deceived all parties and took advantage of the people's resentment and misery, and drowned people in seas of blood. The means of their rule was to horrify people. They led people to a bloody philosophy of natural death. Any tyrant has the power to do the same, even if he were the opposite of Marx. This occurs frequently in all historical eras."

Waheeb smiled maliciously and said: "How can you talk like this about the revolutionary avant-garde? The leading group of the elite? They are a group of faithful, intelligent intellectuals. They preceded their age, and jumped with history a big jump to the world of today. This leap broke, along its great start, some rotten heads. There is nothing in that." Then he continued sarcastically:

"The way to paradise is full of loathsome things." I said: "If I reached heaven over the corpses of millions of the deceased, I would be..."

Waheeb interrupted me chuckling:

"A savage beast, a criminal; I know.."

Then he went on talking in a strange calmness: "If you ask me about my opinion, I'd say that this man should be hanged in a public courtyard by the hands of Arabs themselves, so that reactionism would be curbed and goes back to its dens."

I caught his arm and said: "Haven't you said yesterday, that Omar was in the row of the struggling people?"

"He had done his role; and every age has its men and values."

I asked: "What do you mean by progressiveness Waheeb?"

He replied while smiling: "Science.. at first. It means the rejection of old accepted rules, and the worn, defeatist principles. Then supplying food for every hungry man; employment for the unemployed; the destruction of different kinds of deceit and exploitation so that true liberty is obtained; and to believe in reality."

I asked: "And what did Omar say?"

Abd Al-Wahab rushed in to say: "He was a ruler in which humanity hasn't begot anyone else like him in his justice, modesty, mercy, and the respect of the mind. The descandance of inspiration many times, confirmed the validity of his opinion. He wore one garment, and wrapped himself in a rough, cheap outer garment. He owned the profits of the two greatest countries in the inhabited world. He cried out of fear of God. He led his valis to be fair; he treated the problems of his age as the best that a doctor can do, Dr. He was afraid that a mule might stumble in Iraq so

that God might punish him for it. While the false god of the Kremlin, was shedding the blood of millions of people in the name of the welfare of millions. They feared the tyrant while he was laid out on his death bed. On the other side, a woman faced Omar and charged him with an offense. And he stooped down to fulfil her demand. You, who is the son of progression, liberty and science, how far we are from Omar and his age!"

Waheeb bowed his head in silence. He remained absorbed in his thoughts for some minutes, then he raised up his head and said with some embarrassment: "No doubt, that he is a man who deserves to be respected and studied about. But the problem for which I don't find neither an explanation, nor an acceptance is the resurrection of one of the dead after all these centuries."

Abd Al-Wahab took off his shoes; than he stood up in a certain posture and said: "I seek God's protection from Satan the Rejected one. In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful: "Thy people (O Muhammad) have denied it, though it is the Truth. Say: I am not put in charge of you. For every announcement there is a term, and ye will come to know. And when thou seest those who meddle with Our revelations, withdraw from them until they meddle with another topic. And if the devil cause thee to forget, sit not, after the remembrance, with the congregation of wrong-doers." He was surprised at the paleness of Dr. Waheeb's face who muttered: "As if these verses were descended to be directed to me."

Chapter 13

The doctors in the hospital and other working people were summoned to be interrogated about the private aspects of the famous patient. The first question was: Was any strange thing noticed in the belly or within the body of the patient? The question was funny, and the answer neither needed any confirmation nor it led to any perplexity. But the second question, and it was more important, was about whether the patient hallucinated during his regaining consciousness after being anethetized. They stated the facts nothing more and nothing else. Even Dr. Abd Al-Wahab volunteered and explained to them who were Al-Numan Ben Mukaren and Saad, whom the Caliph meant in his speech. But the secret service officer asked threatening:

"Did he mention the name of one of the commandos or fedayeen organizations?"

"No."

"Did he talk about any Arab or Islamic country?"

"No."

The Intelligence man seemed to be suspicious of their answers and he cried: "I can't bear to stand, my hands being tied, in front of a conspiracy plotted under my sight and hearing."

Abd Al-Wahab said: "We said the truth and nothing else."

Dr. Waheeb laughed in sarcasm and said:

"Even you are the victims of a fantasy - God have mercy on the ancient poet when he said: 'Life, death, then resurrection; The words of fantasy."

And the Egyptian surgeon Dr. Mahmoud Anani said as he stressed on the articulation and the letters: "I don't have anything to comment on. I'm here to answer yes or no."

As for me, they've isolated me alone, and the interrogation went on with the doctor, for a short while; and when they went out, I prepared myself to enter. I was greatly astonished when I saw two armed soldiers coming, then they pushed me into a locked car appearing as a dark cell, taking me to a far place in New Jerusalem. It was one of the prison camps which I hadn't the honor of entering before. They threw me into a dark cell with no mattress and no water. In one of its corners, was a small bucket to relieve nature. And I stayed there, a prey to darkness, silence and waiting for some hours. They passed as a lifetime, and at midnight, they took me out from the cell, and the jailor pushed me roughly and brutally; then he hit me on my bottom.

The beginning of the poem was profane, and this couldn't bring any good news. Then he kicked me with his heavy shoes and blood was boiling in my veins, then I turned to him in rage. He roared as a savage beast: "Don't you like my behaviour? Take.. Then he slapped me on the face and followed it with a strong blow with his fist, which he directed at my lower jaw. Consequently, I swayed, But I controlled myself and didn't fall down, and I muttered: "This is unfair." He burst out laughing in sarcasm, and pushed me from the back so that I nearly dropped down on my face. Another man caught me and said tenderly: "Why do you treat him in a harsh way?"

I was astonished: Was there a man who knew how to be tender and compassionate? He surprised me with a sudden blow, and I sobbed; and he followed it with a strong kick on my belly. I swayed after that toward the ground, unable to move; and pain was tearing me from inside, and my head was spining. He pulled me by the neck tie till I dropped down on the ground fully prostrated. Two trained dogs jumped over me and started to bite my body till they tore up my pants and spilled my blood. The myrmidons were

laughing and they called the dogs by some names of the Arab leaders, and a man shouted from far: "You fools, stop this violence. To punish someone before interrogating him is not proper. Our country is the only one in the East that is protected by liberty and laws. It treats people from every color and religion honestly and sensibly. Don't do harm to our reputation."

The man who said this was an Israeli officer. I knew this method well: behind the sweet words, there would be a horrible torture. He gives his order to strike, then he blames the ones who followed his orders. Or he calls for mercy in order that the innocent people will be poured over with different kinds of endless brutality. Jailors are like this everywhere... A simple trick which doesn't fool but the poor ones and stupid people. The officer approached me and patted on my head in extreme tenderness, and I said: "I feel so much thirsty."

He asked the jailor to bring a glass of water. Then he turned to me calmly and said: "Nothing will save you but your telling the truth; you know that. And the sensible person is the one who saves himself from troubles, and saves others from the unjustifiable effort. We'll take from you everything we want in any means. This is a must, because it is related to our safety and the security of the state. The whole world does the same.. Do you promise me that you'll offer what information you have?"

I said, and my tongue in my mouth was like a piece of wood: "I promise you, I don't have anything I'm afraid of to say aloud."

He frowned, and gave me the glances of a hungry wolf and said: "Let's see what has happened from the beginning till the end. And don't forget anything whatever insignificant it is. Speak about everything: Now have you met him? What did you say and what did he say? What kind of comments did he utter? How does he eat? How does he drink? The personalities he has met? His opinion concerning the Middle-East problem and the decision of the Security Council, and the negotiations between the Arabs and Israel.." I started to answer all his questions, but the officer asked: "What does he think of us?"

"His opinion is bad with respect to you and to the Arab countries in general. The whole world, in his opinion, is going through a black paganism and is sinking in a swamp of sins and corruption: It is hindered by falseness and corruption."

The officer laughed, so that his throat was nearly ripped open, and he said:

"These are the words of an eloquent man who likes writing. Such words neither bother nor annoy me."

And I pointed out to him that I didn't know at all the place where he was brought up in and his connection with the organizations."

"But you are his closest best friend."

"I'm a man whom destiny has put in his way, officer. I wasn't waiting for him; we didn't fix an appointment."

The officer's face was covered with seriousness and he said: "Terrorist actions have increased since he has come; and demonstrations have increased also. What's the meaning of this insurrection?"

"He doesn't have anything to do with this."

"What's your evidence?"

"I'm nearly with him all the time."

"Don't you have a job?"

"I've been driven out from my job without any reason."

"You're a smart fellow."

"I haven't concealed anything, sir."

"You're lying; we won't fail to undo the sealing; we are able to disclose what is hidden behind the invisible."

I said unconsciously: "You're challenging God."

"This is my business, or do you want to give us his message?"

"I'm sorry."

"Our Intelligence men know everything. They know about the distribution of the Arab Forces and their weapons and bases of operation, and their foreign experts. It is impossible for this ridiculous puzzle to keep on being obscure. If a secret opposes me, either I solve its symbols, or I'll smash it forever. Do you understand my words?"

I said, while I was swaying: "I'll nearly be killed by thirst, and it is too hot."

He waved to a man standing near, and he asked him to bring water at once.

"This Omar is worthless. What is important are the invisible hands that move him and the plot which they have laid down against us. He is just a tool."

"And what would I do?"

"You haven't enlightened us with any fact."

"I disagree with you sir. Everything is so clear." He clutched his fist and waved it threatingly:

"I can smash you like an insect. Hundreds like you are swallowed and disappeared in our prison camps. And no one will cry over them. There is no meaning in being obstinate if this will cost you your life."

He produced an artificial cough, and I saw three gloomy faces, and whips being raised up then falling down on my head, body and face. My body started to twist in pain, and I put my hands over my eyes and cried for help. The officer said while he was leaving the place:

"You'll stay under this heavy down-pour till the tie in your tongue is disentangled."

I ran after him after the whipping scorched my body like fire, and I caught his hand and said: "Wait... I'll say whatever you want."

He smiled, and went back to his office in the open air, and the dazzling light; and he pointed at the three devils; they backed off. I said, as my eyes were glistening with tears: "Either I create events or you have to believe me."

He laughed a licentious laugh and said: "Then invent for us something convincing."

I started to pull my hair in rage and say: "But I can't. Do I have to accuse the Caliph of something he hasn't done?"

"Well... Don't invent. Tell us your ideas related to the subject truthfully."

I said without stammering: "The man is Omar Ben Al-Khattab, and the Able God has revived him back to life again. He came to make up for the corruption that is prevailing among Moslems especially and people in general. He hasn't come to arrange a conspiracy against Israel."

The officer said slyly: "Why has he descended particularly in Jerusalem?"

"Because he has visited it in his life. And he has built for himself a mosque near the Resurrection Church in respect for the liberty of ideologies. I don't know how to explain this matter; for this is in conformity of the will of God."

The officer turned back to his malicious smile: "It was possible for him to descend in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Lebanon, Arabian Maghreb, Indonesia, Pakistan. Or was he afraid in any country, to be accused of spying or conspirating against the regime of the state?

Doesn't the matter arouse some amazement?"

I said: "It's exciting.. really."

"Then we have a right to doubt."

"And I'm right in not knowing."

"You're trying to win me over.. Eh?

I said: "Thirst has taken possession of me."

He leaned towards me in rage: "Then go and drink from the wine of paradise. There, you won't be inflicted neither with thirst nor with having an empty stomach. Tell me, what's the meaning of this last expression?"

"Hunger."

"Bravo.."

The officer snatched his lighter and cigarette nervously, and addressed his men:

"Take him to the cell. Don't give him even one sip of water."

And I dropped down in my cell, thirsty, feeling pain and sad. I was nearly suffocating due to my worries and apprehensions. The range of danger was surrounding us more tightly day after day. The dirty hands were trying to surround the Caliph and to stifle down his hopes. They won't let him perform his message. This is what I had said before, but nobody listened to what I'd said. They were watching his companions, and exhibiting his pictures in every place, providing big rewards for anyone who would give any evidence that uncovers his personality. They won't stop from going on and conspiring. I wondered what were they doing with him at that time in the hospital? And what kind of new traps they were setting up for him? If they ripped me apart, I wouldn't have abandoned him; he was the great chance toward the greatest salvation. He was the one I was

looking for, the one who could answer the most difficult questions without stammering; and his words were pouring forth like a clear source; his ideas were emitting confidence and certitude. If ten thousand devoted men were with him, he could have led us to stand and behind us a wonderful dawn.

* * *

On the next day, the officer opened the cell, and threw the morning newspaper at me and said: "look what did the Caliph, who has brought for you the light and salvation?"

My heart beat faster, my joints were trembling, and my looks were wandering; but I controlled myself and I caught the newspaper and tried to run over its lines probing: There was a clip of the Caliph and Rachel, and I shouted vehemently: "It's a dirty trick."

"This is what happened."

"It's not possible; I know him; this is an invented tale from its basis. Is it logical for the Caliph to behave like a teen-ager so that he steals a kiss or behaves improperly? You're lying, I saw her being slapped by him when she tried to approach him. He hit her with his stick, and this happened in front of me.

It is also reported in the police center. The picture that is seen in the head of the paper is another trick. You want to stain the man's reputation and belittle his reverence."

Then I continued in obstinacy and thirst for revenge: "People won't believe you; they know you, and you know that what's stated here is wholly untrue."

The officer said, sarcastically: "He has smashed himself before we thought of doing it."

"It's impossible.. you've been trying for fourteen centuries of time and you've failed. You couldn't extinguish the light of God in our hearts. A piece of land, from millions of wide miles in the whole world, has been taken by force, but the light will go on."

And I started to read out loud: "Fain would they put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah disdaineth (aught) save that He shall perfect His light, however much the disbelievers are averse".

He kicked me violently and said: "Let him pant like a dog. Don't be kind to give him even one drop of water till he licks our shoes, in case he wants to choose the bless of Heaven. Ha.."

Chapter 14

Rachel disappeared, and I disappeared too. I was told later by Dr. Abd Al-Wahab, that the Caliph was astonished about our disappearance, and he showed much anxiety. In spite of this, he thought that an emergent excuse or an important matter had occupied us for some time. He declared from time to time that the situation didn't indicate any confidence, and that he didn't trust these Zionists. Abd Al-Wahab found it necessary to explain to him the secret of my sudden disappearance and the Caliph said irritably: "This is a dishonorable behaviour that is done by the authorities. They have been acting like this since ancient times. If God enabled them to be influential in a land, they used to cause havoc and to squander the freedom and values of others. I'm not afraid to state aloud this opinion of mine. They should know it. The important thing is, how to confront this ill-treatment."

Abd Al-Wahab said: "Walls have ears Caliph.."

He ignored his comment and cried out: "Moslems have to move and do something in the whole world."

"In order to do this, there are horrors and hardships."

He started to mutter some Koranic words: "Warfare is ordained for you, though it is hateful unto you; but it may happen that ye hate a thing which is good for you, and it may happen that ye love a thing which is bad for you. Allah knoweth, ye know not."

Then he turned to him and said: "Jihad is a religious duty."

"The basis of modern politics, Caliph; requires great patience so that we could complete our preparations, and to

win over the support and approval of international public opinion."

He said in distress: "Public opinion! It's a tragedy.. I've known now! Marshes are full of rottenness; and the striking paganism only breeds biased rules; it only plants vices.. A vicious circle, you get ready, and your enemy does the same. You try to get the support of public opinion and so does your enemy. The victory which your enemy obtained, topples over the balance of justice. Right is on the side of the strong. Listen to me carefully: Infidelity is one community. Whenever a war breaks out on earth, one of the two sides is militarily stronger than the other. Militarily superiority by itself, is not an important factor. Many people have won, while they were less in number and equipment. They've won because they were more faithful." Abd Al-Wahab bowed his head and said: "We aren't fighting Israel alone.."

"Do you mean that it is inescapable to wait? You've been waiting for a long time. This means defeat and death.. If Moslems were united together, their roaring would shake the guards of ill-treatment and tyranny."

He moved restlessly in his bed and continued: "The first matter is not the weapon and the public opinion."

"What is it then?"

"The first matter is that the Moslem individual be found, then the Moslem army. This is not a mere personal point of view; it is natural with respect to the principles of religion."

The phone started to ring, and Abd Al-Wahab hurried up to answer; it was Rachel who insisted to talk with the Caliph immediately. Abd Al-Wahab wasn't pleased, and he asked her to leave the man alone and she should go on in her own way. She was surrounded with suspicions, and the companions of the Caliph didn't want to have anything with her.

"In God's name, the matter is very important." The Caliph took up the receiver and went on listening to her: "Don't believe what the newspapers have published."

"I know that their content is false."

"Have you read today's newspapers."

"No."

"Well.. if they bring you one of them, spit on it and crush it with your shoes."

The Caliph said in astonishment: "Why? I take care to know everything that can be known. Maybe, I'll reach a certain standard of knowledge, where I may be able to give out my opinion."

"Please.."

"Why is it harmful to you?"

"They aim at destroying whatever there is between us."

"The firm, brotherly relationship can't be destroyed by lies or false rumours."

He put down the receiver as he watched the telephone in surprise: "Where is Rachel now?"

"In New Jerusalem."

"This is a strange tool for transporting distances. praise for the Graceful God: "We shall show them Our portents on the horizons and within themselves until it will be manifest unto them that it is the Truth."

Abd Al-Wahab found it inescapable to tell the Caliph what the newspapers had published. It is impossible to hide anything these days. Untrue or true news are spread forth in society without any obstacles; they are like the air we breathe. It is a world, in which its scandals are repeated by the people as the sweetest tune. They invent from silly things long tales adorned with lies, tricks and surprises in order to attract the attention and bring pleasure.. It is something like drugs, satisfying the sick hearts. Abd Al-Wahab intended to tell the Caliph about everything. The Caliph heard the story that was published in the newspapers; then he smiled bitterly and rubbed his hands together and said: "So strange.."

"Don't be sad Caliph, for it is another kind of wicked wars."

The Caliph looked up at the white, lit ceiling and said: "Do you remember 'the story of the false rumour?'

It is mentioned in the Koran. It is about Aisha, the mother of the faithful, when the dishonest, hateful and deceived people accused her of adultery and she was innocent."

The Caliph whispered: "They were horrible days. The Messenger had suffered a lot because of it.. He was the Prophet, the leader of the nation and its ideal; and to disgrace or defame his wife among Arabs was something horrible. That is why the Divine Providence took care to defend the honest, and faithful people, and to punish the sinners severely."

"Yes, it was a great crime committed against Aisha".

"It was intended mostly against the Messenger. And today they're bringing forth another false rumour in order to beat and destroy me."

Omar went on to look up at the ceiling and said: "Do you remember the poet of the Jews Kaab Ben Al-Ashraf?"

"I remember.. he used to compose love sonnets about the women of the Prophet. He was chanting with long poems of whoredom and falsehood in all parts of the Peninsula."

"He was punished by death."

"Do you remember Huii Ben Al-Akhtab the leader of the Jew?"

"Yes."

"Do you know that he knelt down for the idols of Kuraish, to assure them that their religion was truthful and the religion of Mohammad was not? He was a Jew, who surely knew that to worship idols was an idiocy and a despise for the human mind."

The Caliph sighed sadly: "They've been always like this: They resort to the dirtiest and lowest tricks.. I know them for a long time. The battle was and still is going violent where the enemy uses every kind of weapon, iron, wickedness and lies."

Abd Al-Wahab said: "We call it psychological war."

The Caliph said while laughing: "You're skillful in inventing names and conventions."

The Caliph stopped talking for a while then he said: "It is a subtle way to kill without spilling blood.. Well, I'll face the people with the reality and challenge their baseness with the honesty of my words and faith, and I'll slap them with the indisputable evidence."

Abd Al-Wahab whispered: "Rachel is a dirty tool; she

might side with them at any time condemning us of something we are innocent of."

"I'm sure she won't do it."

"She's one of them."

"Yes, but now she belongs to a new term and she has been purified from her old miseries."

The Caliph's words couldn't eliminate Abd Al-Wahab's suspicions. Events were going on, and the Caliph didn't know that the zionist authorities had given an order to the hospital administration that it won't allow the patient to go out, in case he recovered, except by a written order. And the one who would oppose this order, would expose himself to being hurt.

Abd Al-Wahab said: "The hospital is surrounded by their men. You are a prisoner now.."

"Don't mind.. When you tell me that I've recovered, I'll go out and no one can stand in my way."

"You're simplifying things, and that's what bothers me."

"Wherever you are, death will reach you, even if you were in lofty towers."

"But we want you to live, to stay.."

"Helpless, reckless wishes; the thing is in God's hands only and He is the Omniscient and the knowing.."

The Caliph then, smiled happily and said: "We are prisoners, but words reach people and they say them over and memorize them by heart. These words do wonders to the people. God has invisible soldiers and I'll go out by God's will at the right time."

"Where will you go?"

"To one of God's houses; I'll seclude myself in a mosque; or may be I'll search for a job to get money. It is not good for them to get rid of me now. I know the method which they intend to work out. They believe that I don't carry a weapon made of iron. My weapon is the word which awakens the sleepy; it burns corruption. They're trying now to arouse people against me and to stain my reputation in order that I'll be ruined by the hands of the ones who believed in me and kissed my feet and shed remorseful tears. They are wicked Dr. My weapon is the honest word and theirs is lying and falsehood.. Who'll be victorious?"

A tear glistened in Abd Al-Wahab's eyes and he said: "Praise the Lord, this is a miracle.. you know well what they're planning."

"For long years, the Messenger was confronting their tricks. He was, God bless him and grant him salvation, opening our eyes to realize how low and deceitful they were. He used to know about their tricks before they took place."

Abd Al-Wahab cried out: "Caliph, leave this land and we'll be with you. Let's go to another country where we can find safety and freedom; it is a kind of immigration."

The Caliph said: "I haven't decided yet."

Then he turned to him and smiled: "Dr. when a pestilence attacks a country, do you treat the patients amid the battle, or you escape - and you are the doctor - to a far country?"

Dr. Abd Al-Wahab shook his head silently.

Chapter 15

Rachel's episode exploded in the circles of the population in Jerusalem as an extremely explosive bomb, leaving behind an uproar and a thick smoke and a non-stopping, vehement conflict. A concealed commandos man said: "Rachel is an agent working for the Zionist Intelligence Bureau and the C.I.A. She has been recruited to seduce and charm the Caliph in order to hinder him from accomplishing his duty; and to put in his way the obstacles to distort his history and religion."

And one disabled veteran of the war said: "The tricks of the Israelites are vicious. For they proceeded to inject the Caliph with a drugged medicine, or they've given him the L.S.D. drug, and so they has influence over his mind and emotions.

A discharged journalist who was a former speaker of long-standing experience in the broadcast; and who refused to cooperate with the Israelite said: "I swear that the story is invented from its basis. Its happenings aren't proved to be true at all. They have written it in a number of newspapers, in the same style and in the same arrangement as if it is a report issued by those negotiative meetings."

And one of the official, Moslem, learned men said: "the son of Adam is a sinner; and the dearest sinners to God, are the repentful." A parson in the Resurrection Church had commented: "I respect Omar; and I don't doubt that he is clean. Although I don't agree with him with respect to the ideology, yet, he is a great man. He had rejected the demand of the Patriarch when he was in the church at the time of calling for prayer. He declined to pray in it because

he respected our feelings; and he went out to pray outside. He was firm and merciful; and he treated women throughout his life firmly and justly. He didn't think on any day, to sell his abode in the hereafter, or to forsake his belief. It's something agreed upon: The falseness of the newspapers doesn't need any proof for anyone who has eyes to see."

I knew later, that the head of the Intelligence Bureau, had summoned Rachel before the beginning of publishing her private life on the newspapers. He informed her that the Intelligence Bureau intended to direct a blow that could distort the Caliph's reputation. He explained to her what would be published by the papers about the fabricated assault incident; and she shouted protesting: "I reject this behaviour."

"Why?"

"Because it messes up everything arranged in our plan."

He smiled slyly and said: "You don't have the right to protest. 'Big brains' are thinking about it, and they've acknowledged this policy. We don't have the right to repute it; you have only to execute Rachel."

She shouted excitedly: "I'm not a machine."

"You're a soldier in the battle."

"You're playing with words."

"You are, Rachel, a ring in an accurate, and organized system. I am the same; and the high policy of the state is controlling us all." She said, while she was collecting her things and going to stand up: "I quit.."

He approached her eagerly; then held her hand and let her sit down with an assumed gentleness: "Are you mad?"

"I won't do such a thing:. I can't."

He burst out laughing ironically:

"Rachel, I know you .. Are you trying to play with our nerves?"

Then he sighed and said: "What we ask from you is to give statements to the press, T.V. and Radio confirming the incident."

She cried out vehemently: "I won't do it."

"This is a strange behaviour.. Are you conceited or deceived? Besides, we can do ultimately without you. We'll

write for the newspapers assumed declarations, and we'll attribute it to you."

She cried out: "This is vileness."

"It is the war my girl. Remember the hardships of long years."

"I'll state aloud the truth in front of all; and I'll expose your falseness."

"What you think of doing is in vain: your stay will be limited and you're surrounded by guards."

Rachel started to curse and damn; and hit with her weak fist, the officer's big chest.

She was declaring her despise and disgust, and the officer was smiling in a strange coolness; then he twisted her arm and let her sit down a second time on the seat, saying in his amazing calmness:

"This is the beginning of getting rid of him. We'll follow it with other steps. Does it occur to you that we'll publicize that he's a zionist agent, serving our common interests with America? It's for you to imagine the violent reaction among Moslems and Arabs all together. This would be the bombshell of the season. And in order to make the plot tightly woven, we'll drown him with gifts and respect. And one of our prominent men will visit him secretly. But this secret visit will be known by people in our own way, so that it would be more exciting and will have more effect."

She roared: "Rudeness."

He laughed and continued: "We'll publicize distorted declarations from his mouth, connected with religion and politics. We'll make of him a caller for peace between the Arabs and Israel. He'll also declare that the ancient, historical story about the driving Jews out of the Arabian Peninsula is untrue, so as to fit the atmosphere of the waited for peace. The most dangerous of all will be his statement about the printed Koran in Israel, which the Moslems have fought for what it contains of alteration. He'll state that this Koran is the most proper and accurate copy... What do you say?"

Rachel said, all her body was trembling: "These exaggerations and lies will expose your viciousness."

"This is the sketching of trained experts, idiot! This is a

science in which philosophers, psychologists, intelligence men and rabbis have participated in its production."

Then he narrowed his eyes and looked at Rachel in anger: "Why are you defending this man with all this zeal and intensity?"

"Because he's been wronged."

"But he's a danger that is threatning us."

"Stop the danger by a moral or lawful procedure."

"Morals corrupt politics; and the law is slow and hesitative. We're in a war Rachel."

"How immoral you are!"

He laughed ironically: "You're dreaming of a night in his arms."

"I've been purified from my sinful desires."

"It's impossible.. you're a woman."

"God damn you all."

He let out a breath in boredom and contempt, then he said: "Think about it. You're our great hope in working out the plan. We're given great effort in shaping and preparing you. If we lose you, we'll lose a lot. Remember that there are brothers of yours dying in the battle-field everyday for the sake of our generations. Where they die, there exists no morals and no laws. They give their blood freely, and you refuse to give some words away. Words compared to blood are nothing."

Silence prevailed. Rachel was thinking: She didn't want to be far from the Caliph, and at the same time she wanted to protect him. So why couldn't she treat her people in the same way they were treating others? This behaviour of hers is justified for the Caliph had told her once: 'The honor of the means is linked with the honor of the goal. Great ends aren't reached by honest people except by pure means'. I beg your pardon Caliph, my enemy is carrying a machine gun and I can't face him with a weak blow. I'll face him with the same weapon which he is using. There is no other way.

Then she gave the secret-service man the glances of a trained, flirtatious woman, and said:

"How much will you pay me?"

"What is equivalent to your family's salary for ten years."

"What will you give me in advance?"

"25 %".

"On one condition."

"At your disposal Rachel, you who are the star of the Israeli society."

She said, bowing her head in perplexity: "I won't tell any journalist anything."

"Don't worry, we'll take care of the newspapers."

"Now, let me go to him."

"Be aware not to refute what we have published."

"I won't meet any journalist; I want to go to the Caliph."

He told her to postpone this for a while. Then he accompanied her to the prison camp which I was in on the next day. It seemed that the Intelligence Bureau thought that it was proper to set me free, so that I could stay with the Caliph, especially after they found out that I didn't have anything new, in spite of how hard they tried, and how much tortured I was. It was necessary to act out a play in an attempt to hide the truth from me. When I was summoned to be investigated for the last time, I was surprised to see Rachel on the ground, dropped in neglect and tied with ropes while the officer was cursing her. When I arrived, the officer said: "You're the secret key, yet, you refuse to guide us to the truth. We'll set you free hoping that you'll manage and handle the matter. Our spies will be following you everywhere."

The officer wasn't a fool to tell us this thing while were near each other. He wanted to lead us to believe that it wasn't a problem between an Israelite and an Arab. It was a matter of security; and the security adopted took measures indiscriminately against all. There was no differentiation between me and Rachel. It was a presentation of the Zionist justice.

When we left the prison camp, and reached the highway, I was greatly astonished to see Rachel crying. She was trying to positively deny what the papers had published. The most amazing of all was, what she told me about the conversation that went on in the Intelligence Bureau, and

the plot they were planning against the Caliph. I stopped stunned, in front of this girl who was a riddle to me: Should I judge against or with her? She said: "I won't give up my new religion."

"It is a burden, a big sacrifice, and it costs a lot."

"I know; I've seen and heard."

Then she was silent for a while and said: "Do you know that Islam is truthful.."

"How?"

"What I've seen in the Intelligence Bureau didn't impress me as Omar's words. Their hatred and deviation were shown clearly to me through the face of the head of the Intelligence Bureau.. Shame was impersonified in him... I recall Omar's face, then I go back and remember that other ugly face and my belief in Islam grows sure.

She stretched out her hand to me suddenly and said: "Let's agree, put our hands together, commit ourselves to protect the Caliph against their dishonesty and to be a brother and sister who are truthful and in harmony.."

"I do.. I promise to do the same."

I don't know what induced Dr. Abd Al-Wahab to say the day he saw Omar for the first time.. I remembered these words then.. and I said them over again in a low voice.:

"The road was rough, blazing with fire, suffering and anxiety. I've taken the mind by itself as my companion... I felt that I had missed a wonderful side which isn't reached except by the devoted ones who search for the light of truth... the maps were in my hands while I was going on and on till I fell down out of exhaustion. My eyes looking up towards the sky.. a gulp of water.. but where? I was searching for a guide but I didn't find him, then I heard him in the wilderness calling: "But he who turneth away from remembrance of Me, his will be a narrow life, and I shall bring him blind to the assembly on the Day of Resurrection.", and I have known the way, you the son of Al-Khattab.. sight and insight.. spirit and body.. mind and emotion.. The presence of the "Truth" in His Perfection... And I've been searching for you for a long time..."

And I looked at Rachel, tears were glistening behind the black shawl...

Chapter 16

It was strange that the lie which journalism had propagated didn't turn much attention. This thing had annoyed the security authorities very much and it spread in themselves a hidden anxiety. And in one of the secondary schools for girls in Jerusalem, Rachel cried out saying aloud that the story which claims her being raped is a fabricated story from its origin, and that sick, hateful illusions had woven its threads out of pure imagination and falsehood. She assured the girls that Omar was a right, devoted religious man, and that he carried in his heart a great love for people and he behaved according to his belief and faith; that he was going on enlightment and guidance, and that God has granted him a lot of intelligence and a sublime character. He had a supernatural power to convince.. and that she had never seen in her life a man like him. She positively believed that anyone like him would be able to save human kind from the confusion, miseries and perplexities that they are suffering. She gave them an account about how she had become a Moslem from the beginning till the end and about the dialogue that used to go on between her and the Caliph. She traced a clear affection in themselves, attracting to her the attention of all of them.

One of the students said: "But he is biased to the Arabs."

Rachel said: "Sisters, he's biased to the right, he hates mistreatment in all its forms and kinds disregarding the identity of the unjust. Such is his character."

"He wants to turn the woman back to the dark ages of "Hareem"!

Rachel replied with confidence: "Woman in his view is a

human being in the full sense of the word. But he refuses her humiliation and deviation, he doesn't consider these as a kind of liberation, but a kind of seduction, corruption, and animalism which hurts the individual and causes damage to the safety of the society. Even, they degrade "woman" herself. The woman in the early times of Islamic ages was a fighter, she could bandage the wounds, she was a poetess, a theologian, a narrator of the Hadith. She used to participate in events and her view was often considered."

A third student said:

"It is obvious that he is adhering to the laws that prevailed in the old ages, and in fact, what used to fit for the past doesn't hold true for our present time."

Rachel indulged saying: "This is a claim which seems to be true but it is false from within. He doesn't commit to laws but to principles and values; for justice isn't influenced by time, past or present, and so is freedom, brotherhood and love.. these values are the scent that freshens up the hearts of human kind over times and ages, they are the protective shield of human dignity in all times.."

A girl whose father was a prominent member in the Israeli Labor Party said:

"This is the age of science, not that of religion."

Rachel said with much irritation

"The Caliph says: In Islam there is no conflict between religion and science because the methodology of Islam is rational. It commits itself to conviction, proof and reflection, and is in harmony with the healthy nature of man. The issue of the gap between religion and science is a new issue that raised in Europe when scientists there faced the people in charge of religion with the newly rising theories and inventions. Is there any one here who can deny that Moslem scientists, have established the experimental sciences in the fields of astronomy, physics, chemistry and medicine, centuries ago: Al Razi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Al-Haytham, Ibn Al-Nafees, Ibn Hayyan, Ibn Khaldun and others..."

Another girl said:

"Religion leads to fanaticism, and people should be brothers, in spite of the differences in sects, religions and colors..."

Rachel laughed and looked at the girls smiling: "Sisters, we are with no religion now, has fanaticism disappeared? Besides, I say that true religion doesn't include blind fanaticism! Deviants in all religions - are the ones who fall in this dwelling... And Mohammad says that the one who calls for fanaticism is never a Moslem. And the faith of the Moslem is not completed except when he believes in Moses, Jesus, Mohammad and all prophets and the Holy books that have preceded. So has any religion performed as Islam has performed?"

A girl who was trying to hide her laughs, said: "And his opinion about love, Rachel?"

The question did hurt her, as she conceived the cunning intention of the girl, but Rachel resorted to patience and wisdom, and said: "Love has two sides: instinctive and human.

The first is organized and controlled by marriage, whereas the second is a noble emotion that causes the heart of the believer to beat for human beings."

A hostile newspaper published all Rachel's speech in the girls' school, but the Israeli censorship confiscated the publication as it was suggested - secretly - by the General Intelligence. This caused the price of the copy of the newspaper to become ten times more than the usual price. And people, whether Arabs or Israelies were looking for this newspaper in the place where it was expected to be, and they exchanged the copy secretly as if it were a hostile, dangerous publication, or as if it were a kind of drug that is prohibited to sale. Academic activities were disored till the next day, and the following three days after that exciting encounter . This is because debate flared up and opinions were roaring in utter confusion and the school administration couldn't control things. And something occurred that caused a great echo in the society of the Sacred City: for ten of the girls, five of whom were Jewish, and two were Christians went to the hospital to meet the Caliph. They wanted to adopt his doctrine and to become his disciples.

And the Caliph welcomed them satisfied and smiling.

I was standing by his side and Rachel was with us along with Dr. Abd Al-Wahab. It was a wonderful scene, and more than that, it was the most wonderful reward for what we have been going through of troubles and sufferings by the hands of the Israeli Intelligence Bureau. Success turns past miseries to mere beloved memories. But alas! We were surprised to see a number of policemen, with them were the parents of the girls, thus the beautiful dream was broken and the girls were led, after being showered with curses and slaps, to their homes, but their plentiful tears were promising a hope that cannot be removed by time. The newspapers did not mention any word about this attitude, but the Israeli parties called its members for urgent meetings and an order was issued to restrict the place of residence of Rachel. Elie was one of the new officers who were appointed to guard the Caliph and to keep watchful eyes on him.

The Caliph said to them:

"I'm looking for something..

Elie said: "What??"

"Where is freedom in your world?"

"It is our motto".

"A motto is something and behaviour is something else, there is no freedom without practice. You sing for freedom, while at the same time you stand against Calling for God, and you punish the people who dare to choose the doctrine that goes with their minds and nature."

Elie said in anger: "You are misleading young girls; and to protect them from you does not contradict with the concept of freedom. We are surrounding an epidemic that is near destroying the city.."

The Caliph smiled in pity and said: "Virtue is a pestilence, but to delude girls under a tree and to play with them freely is liberty and good behavior ! You the son of the rotten civilization."

Elie was shaking all over out of extreme rage. He put his hand on his pistol and started to grate his teeth, but his friend dragged him by the arm saying: "Behave yourself."

The Caliph sighed sadly: "If I had a capable army I

would have gone to teach the enemies of virtue and freedom a lesson, and to open the way wide for the honest word, you the jailors of wisdom. That is what happened in the days of the Prophet. They tortured him, they persecuted him and were harsh towards his companions specially the weak and slaves. They drove them out and snatched their money.. so we carried our arms and to defend ourselves, and our dignity and to free the poeple and let them believe what they wanted to believe in. We used to remove the prison bars which have been built by lords and kings to subdue people.. and in spite of this, some come and to claim that we have spread Islam by force and they know that our motto is "No one can believe by force."

Elie darted at him a scorching glance and said:

"The security of the state is above everything."

The Caliph smiled and said: "What is the state? A number of individuals.. and when these are miserable, the state will be miserable too.. but the state actually, as you imagine, is the rulers and their desires".

Elie was sweating and started to say: "We know our way well.. If your religion were good, Moslems wouldn't have been these days the most backward and weak people.."

The Caliph said emphatically and in sadness: "You are somehow right, but, are they really Moslems? If they were obedient to Islam and behaved according to Islam, then weakness would become strength and humiliation would turn into dignity.. Defect lies in men and not in principles."

Elie screeched on his teeth irritated and said: "You philosophize your failure. All that I know is that we are at the top, and you are in a state of utmost decay."

The Caliph roared: "You pig.. "Glory be to God and His Messenger and to the faithful". Any tyrannical power, won't be able to cover up the Divine Light for ever.."

Elie came near the Caliph and on his face an expression of extreme malice and said: "You won't see Rachel after today."

The Caliph's face brightened up with happiness, then he muttered: "This is not an important subject to me, for Rachel is no more in need of me, God is with her and He is the Might and Strong, do you understand these words? Bilal

was alone.. and there was a woman called Sumaya.. and Yaser.. and Ammar.. they were by themselves amid the roar of blasphemy and its crowds.. Kuraich with all what it had of money, power and hatred, couldn't shake off the faith of these individuals. Do you understand? Rachel is no more in need of me after she had God with her and she can do without me and you.."

Elie darted the Caliph with the glances of a savage wolf, and started moving here and there nervously, then stopped and moved again, and suddenly he said: "You desire her."

"You evalute things by your wrong measures."

"But you do desire her."

He wanted to upset the Caliph and to infuriate him. The Caliph said: "I haven't come to the world to gulp from its pleasures. The embracement of souls is an eternal pleasure which won't vanish. And pure love is the sweetest tune which hearts play on. Do you understand this, Elie? If I want to marry her, I would do it right now but the leader never deceives his followers. And my goal is God. I haven't been attached to any earthly thing."

Elie looked at his wrist and said in revenge: "I've recorded all your speech. These words will condemn you and lead you to the hanging rope.."

The Caliph laughed lightly:

"I've tried death.. I have found it a wonderful journey to the other world.. And I say what I believe in, and I'm ready to repeat the same words and add more, any place, anytime.. I wish the whole world to listen to my words... Do you get me, you the stray Israelis??"

* * *

The Intelligence Bureau went on to execute its designed plan, in order to lead Moslems to believe that the Caliph is but a clever Zionist agent, and to ascribe to him words he never mentioned. They claimed that he condemned the terrorist commandos movements and disapproved them. And that he was calling for peace among the countries of the area including Israel.

But something wasn't expected happened, a secret group had been formed and named themselves "the group of the

Caliph's allies", they started to point the publications and distributed them everywhere, they stuck them on the walls, they put them also in mail boxes, in these publications the group answered the Israeli lies and challenged the authorities to allow foreign newspapers' reporters and the news agencies to investigate by themselves and know the truth, and to see the Caliph. This group annoyed the security authorities and spoiled their plan and ruined their measures.

I wasn't suspected, for I was watched by the Intelligence Bureau, and they knew all my movements and meetings. In fact, the one who played the greatest role in organizing this group was Dr. Abd Al-Wahab al-Saadawi and so was Rachel in spite of the limitation of her place. Even more, there were branches formed out from the group which didn't have any link with us, and these branches behaved in the same way. The strange thing was that some Israelies started to act in an unbelievable way, they reached to the extent of daring to discuss the subject in the streets and clubs, and they were divided into allies or opposers, eventhough the limit of those debates didn't go beyond the limits of positive conduct..

Rachel's family wasn't sorry because of her isolation in the house, for the predominant belief was that any new experience their daughter plunges in would be a rich material full of more events, at the time of writing a biography. Her family was defending her, not because they believed in the soundness of her point of view - for they rejected her becoming a Moslem and they didn't believe it - but for the sake of weaving the interesting play, and to make sure of the success of the deal.

* * *

I knew by chance that Dr. Waheeb Abdallah had disappeared five days before. And it was said that he was in periodic vacation for two weeks. And I knew that the emotional affair that put him together with doctor "Rajaa" had been exposed to ruin in the last days just after a debate concerning the Caliph.

I was disturbed by suspicions due to Waheeb's dis-

appearance. He seemed to me to be soft in touch, but he had the teeth of the snake, he hated both religion and religious. Was it possible that he had started to work on a hostile activity against the Caliph with the co-operation of his companions in the party? He was always declaring for the necessity of keeping the religious movements going on.. and the stiffling of its anti-rebellion before its reaching the stage of ability and execution. I should think of every possibility.. I wished I knew his way.

Chapter 17

When the first news about the appearance of the Caliph in Jerusalem was published, the Islamic and Arab newspapers received the news with extreme reserve. In small squares on the first pages, they have written about the exciting news under the following titles:-

"He claims he is Omar Ibn al-Khattab", "Omar In Jerusalem" and "A new Israeli Innovation" and other similar expressions which carried the meaning of mockery and suspicion.. Events increased and the Israeli newspapers went on and published some details, and the news agencies showed an unbiased interest in this subject in an objective manner and almost without comments. But one of the newspapers, wrote a thorough study - in series - about the Moslem's Caliph and his struggle and battles and his public and private life. Afterwards, books were published. They drew near the different aspects of the Caliph's life for centuries ago, among these books was a small booklet in the children books series, and "Omar's Genius", by Akkad, was reprinted and; so was "Omar, Al-Farouk":- the distinguisher of truth from falsehood, by Mohammed Hassanein Haykal, and also the long play that was written by Al-Ahmad Bakathere. The people who used to write in occasions quickly rushed to prepare related series for the radio and the T.V. The mosque preachers and lecturers didn't hesitate to make their contribution to add more. Even some ministers entrusted with government supervision of estates in mortmain (Wakf ministry) in Arab countries had prepared a serious lecture for this occasion, and distributed it on the preachers who belonged to these countries. The au-

thorities took care, while they were preparing these lectures, to take into consideration all kinds of circumstances and to show up the Caliph as a progressive one who cares for the welfare of the working masses, and who hits the stiff religious men. The mail committee, in turn, issued some commemorative stamps which were considered as masterpieces of wonder and art. Also poets and novelists participated in this occasion, so they recited the most serious poems and they wrote the most outstanding stories. And some motion picture companies offered to the religious authorities a request for an official licenceto produce a movie about the Caliph, and to be able to reveal his character on the silver screen. Religious scientists agreed on condition that the story film, dialogue and the screen script should be revised by them before the performance is ready for the public. There was an old formal legal opinion (fatwa) issued by the committee of the religious men instructing prohibition of showing the Prophet or his companions on the screen in person or shape, so disputes about the subject raised again and conflicts aroused due to the different opposing opinions.

On the other hand, the "leftist" writers handled the subject with some disdain and mockery in the beginning. Their only comments were through funny faric drawings: there was a caricature of Omar holding a whip and chasing the girls who were putting on their swimsuits, on the beach. Another caricature of him lashing an adultrous man in a public field. A third showing him cutting the hands of a gang of thieves. But the dominant movement which was growing and spreading had shaken their seats and shook the ground under their feet. So they changed their plan and put on the appearance of seriousness and interest, and they started to write about communism in Islam and the movement towards the "left" in the first age of Islam. They wrote about Omar in a new novel style using their special conventions such as: class rule, class struggle, dictatorship of the proletariat, dialectic materialism, revolutionary violence, bloody elimination, conflicts of contradiction, the aim of the bourgeoise, mass union, paralyzing the people, union of the feudal lords with the assumed keepers and the exploi-

ters of religions. A surprising mixture of philosophical and scientific conventions, through which Omar and Islam are inserted.

They used to take some words that were handed down by Omar and write them down in beautiful big words amid decorated squares or rectangles or circles in which they wrote what appears to be deep and inspiring comments. The most interesting saying of what I have read at that time was a comment written by a young man who was famous for his inclinations, where he said: "Omar's immortal words are: "If a mule stumbles in Iraq, I would be asked in front of God why haven't I straightened the road for her". This quotation of his, opens the way to a whole outlook for his far-sightedness and his deep innate sense concerning the union of Iraq with the Arabian Peninsula, and other Arab countries. In between the lines we find the responsibility of governor as the representative of the working class in front of the owners of rights and benefits in the movement of history. And the word "God" is a symbol that necessarily stands for the power of the class which saved its rights and fate from the hands of the rotten feudal system, and the treacherous sinful capitalism in the exploiting society of Mecca. And the word "Mule" by itself inspires a delicate sensitivity sharpened by its experiences along the steadfast automatic revolutionary journey, which reminds us of the transparency of the Russian artist Chekov and the realism ot the most famous novelist Maxim Gorky.. etc.". A strange mixture and explanations which I couldn't deduce from, any comprehensive total meaning which is linked with the life of the Caliph, his policy, and belief.."

Even in prisons and prison camps the news spread. The criminals, drug dealers and thieves claimed that a general pardon would be issued for sure because of this happy occasion, and they found the one who would tell them that Omar had abolished the penalty of theft in the year of starvation, and he didn't punish thieves during that period, and that he was merciful, just, and working for making the honest way of living for all the poor, needy and disabled. He is the beloved of the thieves, miserable and wronged people.. The old prisoners stopped repeating the legends of

"Abu Zaid Al-Hilali" and the "Ambitious Princess" and "Arsan Lupin". They adopted instead the coarse of Omar the heroic cavalier who was insurpassable, and who was the just ruler who terminated injustice, and corruption; and who subjugated the Persians and the Byzantines; who took from the rich to give the poor and put an end to patronage and bribery.

Furthermore, the new fashioned shops, where the mini-dress and the French made make-up articles are sold, organized soldes for this happy occasion. Some of them opened branches carrying the name of "Al-Farouk" or Omar Ibn Al-Khattab. Mockery reached its extreme when the drugs policemen laid hold of a huge amount of smuggled hashish from Israel, and the name of the new trademark was "Al-Farouk".

In reality, the interesting subject had created a flow of economic welfare in all fields. Besides, the new born reports recorded a big percentage of male babies who were named "Omar". Even more, some female newborns were named "Hafsa" as the name of Omar's daughter.

The gatherings where people invoked God which were held by the sufis spread in every village and hamlet.

They built up mosques, and some common people claimed that Omar had a tomb inside the mountain denying the historians' confirmation who mentioned that Omar's tomb is besides the tombs of the Prophet and Abu Bakr in Al-Madina. A call was directed - through a small religious magazine which wasn't widely spread - for the Arab countries to appoint the "International Red Cross", as a mediator or the control officers of the "United Nations", to urge Israel to treat Omar as a "War prisoner" and to hand him to one of the Arab or Islamic countries. The religious scholars showed a great enthusiasm in celebrating Omar's days and his brilliant way of living, and they tried to save his active history from legends that have started to spread out among the public.

As for Omar: The person who appeared in Jerusalem, opinions were contradictory. A scholar said that it is a political matter which cannot be dealt with except after governments decide about it. Another one said that if this man

was truly Omar, he would be in charge of the Azhar Faculty, and he would bring troubles on us because of his mortification, sefl-denial and strength. He would make fun of our houses, our daughters' and wives' dresses. Moreover, he would try to whip them. A third one commented saying: "This is the age of adultery and sinful unveiling, and the intellectual, artistic and moral fornication. There is no place for Omar in it, and he will face from the Moslems themselves a war which is not less violent than the Israeli's war against him." But a friend of him replied by saying: "This age with its faults and deviations is the most suitable atmosphere for the rise of a man like Omar, in order to direct it towards the path, and to guide people to the way of good, virtue and justice.." Another scholar said that the whole subject is nothing but a lie.. And a great sufi who was a member in the highest sufi committee said: "I don't doubt that he is Omar himself, it is a mark of honor, or a manifest example on God's Power which is not approached by anyone."

The Islamic and Arabic journalism took an interest in a later stage in Rachel's story and accused the Israeli journalism of pursuing honest individuals, distorting their reputation and fabricating numerous lies around them. Their evidence was Rachel's denial of all that had been published in hostile newspapers about that subject.

But the situation changed completely when one newspaper hinted and led the readers to believe that the man was a zionist agent and a clever American doll. At this stage the newspapers were shocked and violently agitated, and everything was upside-down, they criticized religion and its men, and held up the thread and turned to the treacherous reactionism that cooperated with imperialism and Zionism. And this was the beginning of a series of arrests and investigations.

When the publications of "Omar's Allies Group" appeared, the commentators were confused, what would they say? Would they attack the Zionist lies or would they attack "Omar's Allies Group"? Most security men in the Arab and Islamic world sided with the last opnion. Articles and declarations were issued accused this group of deceit

and dishonesty and of its showing the opposite of its hidden thinking and of gathering revolutionary capacities in order to hinder the commandos fight, and of distracting the people from their authentic real battle. They claimed that "Omar's Allies Group" is but an imperialist movement like the "Liberty Allies Group" and the "Dialogue" magazine which was issued by the imperialist and Israeli intelligence in whose nets many great writers had fallen.. The cunning thing was that some unknown complaints had been sent to some governments, accusing some individuals of belonging to "Omar's Allies Group", and this matter forced the security men to make special files and list for those suspected individuals.

Yes... Israel succeeded in upsetting the Islamic public opinion as it always does. And it wasn't able to achieve this success without Moslems' simplicity, and their political and intellectual atmosphere which was suitable for the growth and spread of these riots.

Chapter 18

One of the editors-in-chief of a newspaper convinced the security authorities to allow him to have a press interview with the Caliph, he made it clear for them that the outcome of the interview would be some embarrassing funny thing which would show the Caliph unable to understand the modern way of living, and to realize its secrets, sciences and achievements. No doubt this would bring about the worst effect on his allies, disciples and the unknown organizations that propagated for his message, and his followers would understand that "we don't fear the Caliph and imprison him, but we consider him a source of funny amusement for the public." That was what the great journalist had said, in fact, he exerted a great effort to reach his aim, and it costed him a lot of money and gifts, and he took advantage of his friendships, and promised to return this service and to propagate in favour of some party during the elections.. They were afraid that the Caliph would resort to silence and refuse to answer. But their fears vanished when the Caliph showed that he was ready to answer any question, even he asked them to let him mix with the people and to walk in the streets, and to go to any place he wanted, for he feared not people and it didn't bother him to say what he knew, nor was it embarrassing for him if he didn't know some aspects.. For this was natural.

Preparations were made, and the Caliph's room was emptied as the great newspaper man entered accompanied by a female editor who knew Arabic well.

The journalist started by saying:

"Journalism is for the service of truth."

"Everything has its own truth, man.. and I've seen by myself much of what you call truth and it turned out to be falsehood and lies.."

The journalist smiled then said:

"It expresses the public opinion".

"No, it is a submissive slave at the service of interests and selfishness.."

The journalist took out some newspapers and said:

"Look, this is an article charging the government."

Omar looked through the article and listened to the journalist while he was reading it. Then the Caliph said:

"There is a great difference between defamation and advice. I had jailed our poet Al-Hutaiaa when he made out of his poetry a platform for curses and obscenity.."

The female journalist leaned towards the boss' ear and said:

"Let's go into the subject directly.. his words are bullets like.."

The newspaperman nodded in consent and asked:

"Who are you?"

"Omar"

"Were you a King?"

"But a servant for Mohammad's nation. I carried a burden in my neck that camels would collapse if they carry. I prayed to God to take me before my body would become weak or my mind distorted.. And He answered my prayer.."

"They said that you were severe in your judgement".

Omar smiled and said:

"As long as the administration of justice is strict, Islam will remain immuned, and strictness of administration doesn't mean killing by the sword, and whiping, instead, it is judging what is right and just.."

The female editor interferred and said:

"What do you think of peace?"

"According to the Islamic law..conciliation between quarreling Moslems is possible, unless this conciliation forbids what is legitimate or admits what is forbidden.."

"What I mean is the settlement between Israel and the Arabs.."

Omar's face became gloomy, and he said:

"How can a reconciliation be settled between the thief and his victim. unless the rights are returned to their owners??"

The journalist interrupted by saying:

"What is the difference between the Arab Moslem and the non-Arab Moslem?"

Omar smiled again and muttered:

"I've said one day: "By God, if non-Arabs achieve some performance while we - Arabs - perform nothing then they deserve to be with Mohammad more than us on the Day of Judgement. Let no man look for kinship, but let him work for God's sake, for those who don't behave, their kinship will not save them.. And my beloved says: "An Arab is not better than non-Arab, nor the non-Arab is better than the Arab but in devotion to God .. and: All Moslems are equal.."

The old journalist cried out cunningly:

"Then why were you killed by Abu Louluaa Al-Majousi?"

"And why your anscestors murdered the prophets?"

The girl moved her head unsteadily and said:

"Love, Prince?"

"It means a lot."

"How?"

"It is only born in the believer's heart."

"And the unbelievers? Don't they know love?!"

"To you be your way and to me be mine."

"I don't understand."

"Your language is different from mine.. I speak in clear Arabic."

"And me?"

"A wolf who wears a woman's dress, your heart is flooding over with darkness which is full of sinful desires.. While I'm looking for people who strip words from their animalistic metaphors and wicked suggestions."

The woman burst out laughing in astonishment and said:

"He knows about literary criticism sir."

"Do you love Rachel, prince?"

"The word "prince" annoys me, girl."

"I won't say it again."
"I love Rachel, as I love any truthful believer in any part of the world.. without seeing him.."
She said in rage:
"Rachel.. the female."
"I haven't thought of marriage at all."
"I mean something else."
"This is not my business."
The journalist waved his hand pointing to her to be silent, then he came near him and said:
"Do you consider movies a devilish act?"
"The movies, as a scientific invention is something to be proud of, but you've filled the container with dirt and pestilence, for this the scientific object of pride has changed to a tool for killing and distorting outstanding virtues.."
"I was told that you've watched the last football match.. Do you like sports?"
"It is an innocent entertainment, and it is a stimulation for the body.. and it is gaining of good skills.. It is something like swords games and horse-racing in our days.."
The female editor interfered interruptingly,
"Do you prefer Western or Oriental music?"
"The beautiful thing is liked, without looking at its Orientalism or Westernism, and love to me is linked with virtue.. what is important is that it won't move up in me evil intentions, or drive me away from God's worship.."
The journalist took up the hint and asked:
"What is the nature of worship?"
"Prayer, invocation for God, fasting, charity, love, truth.. the good deed is a kind of worship.. and to earn one's living is worship. The just judge is worshipping over the platform of justice, and the fair ruler is a worshipper as he holds well the right balance among people.."
The female editor said:
"Who, from God's Messengers do you like best?"
"We don't differentiate between any of his Messengers."
The journalist tried to stimulate him and said:
"You used to hate the Jews of the Peninsula."
"I hated ill-treatment, corruption and treachery."
"You are fanatic.."

"For God alone.."

"Your wars were continuous, and you spilled blood."

The Caliph darted at him a significant glance and said:

"The surgeon had said it was inevitable to pull out the vermiform appendix in order to live.. I've smashed the bars of prisons in which miserable people are suffering.. and I've opened the doors to let the light in and remove the dark.. Do you like yourself to keep the bars on and to let the darkness come over, and enlivens a rotten appendix?

"No one is to be forced to believe".."

The journalist stood up abruptly and said:

"What a disaster! Is he a mad man? Impossible. Where is the illusion they are talking about!!"

The journalist bowed in front of him stunned and said:

"Are you Omar?"

"Yes"

The woman said:

"Ask him about Vietnam's war, sir."

The Caliph shook his shoulders and said:

"I haven't studied this subject yet.. The one who says "I don't know" has the right answer. I don't discuss something except after I know it well."

She said:

"For whom is Jerusalem?"

"Theft doesn't give the thief the right of legitimate ownership."

The journalist whispered:

"And Communism?"

"In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate: The Truth comes from God alone, so be not of those who doubt."

"And the Capitalist countries.., America for example?"

"In the name of God the Merciful, the compassionate: Lo! the riches and the progeny of those who disbelieve will not avail them aught against Allah; and such are rightful owners of the Fire. They will abide therein. The likeness of that which they spend in this life of the world is as the likeness of a biting, icy wind which smiteth the harvest of a people who have wronged themselves, and devastateth it. Allah wronged them not, but they did wrong themselves.

God the Great Hath spoken the Truth."
The old journalist said:
"This is the age of sciences."
"In every age there is a science."
"I mean there is no place for religion."
"The Creator of time and place hasn't given you this authority.. You're conceited.. And the ones who deny God couldn't change from the atoms of the divive universe, one atom.."
The woman cried out:
"Their feet had landed on the surface of the moon."
"This is an insignificant effort.. The bird flies high .. And the eagle flies high near the mountain top. And your planes ride over the clouds, and others reached the surface of the moon.. Variety of abilities.. There is nothing significant about except in its being new. I know it was a dream, but it's not a license for ingratitude towards the Creator of man, earth, moon and the elements."
The woman's head turned, and in her eyes two drops of tears glistened, her body trembled. She cried out for help:
"Let's go sir, I'm nearly going to faint and believe in this man.."
He snatched her from her arm and shouted with cruelty:
"What kind of game is this.. Control yourself.. We haven't come to believe or not to believe.. We've come to perform a journalistic work, a mission.. Do you understand?"
She sat down on a near chair and her hand on her forehead..
The old journalist said:
"Where have you come from?"
"As human beings come.. The place has no significance."
"And what do you want to call people to?"
The Caliph stretched out his hands and spread his palms and said:
"We worship God and we don't believe in another god but Him."
"Do you want to tell the public anything?"
"I've said a lot.. and nothing more. Say: ..work, for God and His Messenger will both see what you're doing."

* * *

The clubs trembled, and the atmosphere was electrified, and people were confused and declared giving up:

"It's a strange phenomenon."

Chapter 19

Rachel's seclusion lasted long and her family felt bored and jealous, specially after the publication of the conversation which the old journalist and the young woman editor had performed. The young woman aroused the interest in her behavior, and showing favourable disposition to what the Caliph was saying: and it cast some light on her. Rachel's father threatened the security authorities to expose their plans, or to bring legal action against them and he refused his daughter's confinement with sufficient excusable reason.. He was always repeating that his daughter had the right to meet whoever she wanted and to adopt the belief she desired, and that the Caliph wasn't a bad person or someone who was proved to be condemned in committing some real action which could be considered against the law. And he said: "To interfere in a personal matter like this, is something that causes sorrow and is considered as a gross attack on the freedom of the citizens and it damages the reputation of the state." Rachel's father had found out that he could stir up a new case, and attract the attention, again to his daughter. Thus, in this way, he would create an interesting material, so that the biography subject would be enriched and its pages would increase, and its price would be raised. Rachel didn't mind to execute this plan, not because she was convinced with the point of view of her father, but because she couldn't bear to stand away from the Caliph, she was feeling an uncontrollable desire to see him, so her confinement pressed upon her nerves, arising rage and depression inside her. Due to this uproar, the security authorities found out that there was no objection

to set the girl free, on condition that she meets the Caliph alone and tries to stop announcing any declarations to the newspapers, or to the common people, especially the young girls.

Rachel put on the clothes that spread all over and she avoided using make-up powder or any cosmetics for the first time, and when her mother insisted on her she said:

"There is no reason for all of this, I hate what is not true and I won't do except the things that are agreed on by the Caliph, I feel a great happiness when I do something he has ordered me, or when I give up an action which he disapproves of."

Her mother laughed then said:

"You are playing your role well exactly as your mother used to do."

Rachel lowered down on her face the black shawl, and went out running, and near the door she met Elie.

"Where are you going?"

She said while she kept on walking:

"To him."

"I know you well Rachel."

"The Rachel of yesterday or today?"

He said defiantly:

"You are really selling your homeland at the lowest price."

She looked at him with a sarcastic glance and said:

"I've believed in the man, and this is my right. Every country in the world embraces different kinds of sects and religions."

He pounded with his feet on the ground and shouted:

"You don't know a thing called "Principles"."

"You are a slave to selfishness and hatred."

He shouted enraged:

"But you are a girl who is enslaved by her desires. I know you well and the man is hard for you to get . And when you get from him what you want, everything will be over... Deprivation beautifies patience for you and makes you conceive false values. Your crippled philosophy will be uncovered sooner or later."

She muttered: "You analyze things with a sick, hateful

mind." Then she mused and said as her eyes went up towards the white clouds in dreaming looks:

"I can't hide his image from my mind, his touching sad words ringing in my head in the morning and at night.. He is the only one in our world who has broken free from the captivation of fear, dishonesty and psychological complexities... If books wrote about him in this way before seeing him, I would have shrugged my shoulder in mockery and would have said that this is a legend which has no existence.. But now I'm truly feeling him near me.. I can hear his words. It always pleased me to compare him to other people, and the great difference terrifies me."

Then she turned to Elie and stopped walking and said seriously:

"Why don't you consider following him?"

"Impossible, I hate him with every particle in my being." He laughed tensely and continued:

"Moslems themselves reject him. And Jews won't leave him alone. And Christians are annoyed at the wide range of his fame and influence.."

Rachel said:

"Nobody has been saved from deviation. Our materialist life has caused people to be hostile towards every beautiful, spiritual meaning. The man of God is not afraid. He doesn't know the diplomacy of this disintegrating age.. He isn't moved by a submissive greed. Our whole world measures its behaviour with respect to its interests, with inferior measures. They even change religion merely to a worldly subject which is tossed by their moods, fanaticism and cheap authorities."

Elie's face grew pale and he said with agitation:

"You speak as a philosopher and sometimes as a preacher.. The catastrophe is that your family and some of our men are still trusting you .. And I.. I am the wretched man, always trying to defend you.. The more you are away from me, the more I want you. What kind of devil has possessed my bod.."

She bowed her head and said confused:

"I am loyal to truth alone.. Why don't you go on with me on the same road Elie? I'll be extremely happy when I see a

man like you spitting on the low trivialities of this age, and setting free his mind and heart from the chains of subjucation. He is free and devotes himself exclusively to God."

He raised his voice trying to overcome his weakness and said:

"I don't know except my job, future and country."

"They've shaped you, you've no will of your own!"

"I am a realistic man."

"How much you are unjust towards realism. You call your surrendering to your desires and greed realism, and you tread on human values, and philosophize your sins, claiming it is realism."

Then she turned to him and said:

"Leave me alone."

He pointed with his index finger threateningly:

"I warn you.."

"I'm free.."

"I will crush you like an insect."

"This is total impotence and idiocy."

"You are tearing noble traditions."

"My new life obeys only God's words."

"Go to Hell."

"Oh! If only you knew how much I'm enjoying the spiritual bless.. Oh!"

Elie turned around and walked on quickly, agitated. Cameras were focused suddenly on Rachel, she averted herself with her hand upset and astonished, and muttered:

"You are poisoning my life, you liars."

Then she waved to a taxi car and hurried to the "Arab Hospital" in Jerusalem.

Chapter 20

Dr. Waheeb returned from his vacation. He was tired and pale as a patient in a convalescent state. He seemed anxious and distracted, and some thought that Rajaa's leaving him was the reason of his suffering. And others thought that probably there was a family tragedy wringing his heart, especially after he had spent his vacation in his occupied village. Whenever someone asked him what was the matter, he would reply briefly: "Nothing!". And Rajaa thought that it was better to be friendly to him, and she said:

"I'm sorry, we were worried about you."

"There is no reason to worry."

"I don't mean to hurt you."

"I know; Rajaa.. There is something stronger than love."

She said, being confused:

"I haven't promised you anything. It was a mere brotherly relationship that went on between us."

He whispered sadly: "There are self-evident truths which we can't ignore.. There was a kind of relationship between me and you. Any relationship shouldn't erase the freedom of any side of the two."

She said: "It makes me feel sad, to cause you any pain.."

"We shouldn't accept a lot of things that hurt us.. It is useless if we resist them."

"Your words express full sadness."

"Because your love was something important in my life.."

She couldn't answer while he shook his head and said:

"You are a woman of principles.. and for this I'm proud of you.. when principles have the full authority, then all our

glooms and our people's miseries will disappear, and a new world will be born.. values to me, were either progressive or reactionary.. a point of view.. I used to despise the convictions of others. This is a great mistake.."

She listened to him with interest then she heard him say:

"If a woman like you, marries a man like me then such marriage would arise many troubles.. I am not saying that this in only against the Islamic law that you believe in. Furthermore, it creates a strange, torn generation.. Some may accommodate to such kind of marriage, and they enjoy the hardships and strange things that accompany it. The Moslem marries a woman who adheres to another revealed religion.. The Moslem woman can't get married to a Marxist who has no religion.."

Rajaa said in agitation:

"There is no reason to talk like this.."

"I hate dishonesty.. such thing have come to your head since Omar came."

Waheeb asked permission to leave and he went to the patients' section. He moved among them examining their cases, deciding what they needed of treatment and care, then he looked for Abd Al-Wahab and asked him to arrange for him a meeting with the Caliph, Abd Al-Wahab said:

"There is no place for mockeries another time."

"Something like this hasn't crossed my mind."

"But he is watched closely.."

"We are physicians, Dr. Abd Al-Wahab."

"Abd Al-Wahab nodded his head approvingly and said:

"Fortunately Elie is not present, he is obstinate and ill-tempered."

Waheeb prepared some medical tools, and Rajaa accompanied him. Then he took permission from the officer in charge and told him that an important examination would be carried out for the patient and that he wanted the patient's room to be emptied from people..

Waheeb's heart was beating violently, and he himself was surprised at this strange thing: The Caliph is just a man without any power, he is surrounded by denial and enmity from every side, and he is watched by the cunning terrible

systems that are nearly crushing him. So, why all this confusion, Waheeb? Rajaa was standing near him and he muttered with unordinary shyness:

"Caliph, I've read everything about you.."

The Caliph said humbly and simply:

"But I'm not everything.."

Waheeb looked at him in astonishment: What a broad intensive word that the Caliph has uttered right away, without meditating or exerting an effort.

"How?"

"The main knowledge is obtained from the source. There lies the overflow and abundant rain.."

"And what is the source, Caliph?"

"God..."

"But I'm unable to grasp the unlimited.."

"Through His light, my son, you can see the universe.. The universe didn't create itself.. It is the creative ability of the Creator.. And through the creature you can see the greatness of the Creator.. The splendid poem tells about a great poet.. Why are we chatting.. I mean God's words, we'll take your hand and lead you to the source.."

Waheeb stopped talking for a while, while Rajaa stood observing what was happening in complete alertness. Waheeb continued his speech:

"I didn't see in life but the suffering of the poor and the miserable people, and I told myself that for the sake of these people I should set up every conceivable effort. To make people happy is an aim..."

The Caliph muttered:

"Aim? No, it is but a means towards goodness and justice... The aim is God.. What you have been working for is great but it is mixed with a hidden confusion.."

"I hear this for the first time."

"Do you believe in Him?"

Waheeb said without any hesitation: "Yes".

"Then your heart is full of happiness, and you stepped at the beginning of the road.. It is time to travel; so go on till the end... And through faithfulness you'll find the features of the road bright and clear.. Shaded by knowledge.. and there you will find the remedy for the poor and the miser-

able.. The guidance of ruling and rulers.. And the many relationships that control the universe and life.. You've not been created for nothing.. and you won't be left with no end.. firm belief is the way to happiness."

Waheeb said:

"What do we tell people to do?"

"Invite them to way of all the Prophets and Messengers .. not to share God by worshipping any other god. In true belief in God alone there is honor, and thus getting rid of paganism which misguide your world without you know. The Koran spoke like this also."

Rajaa said happily:

"An easy call which doesn't burden its owner any trouble."

The Caliph said smiling:

"These words: "There is no god but Him, and Mohammad is God's Messenger" these if they are uttered truthfully the whole world would shake.. and all values would be altered, and snakes would go out from their places spreading their poison without any mercy. And the flocks of wolves would revel tearing the flesh of the faithful. There are, in your world, a lot of false gods refusing to submit to the One and only One God..

I haven't come, children, to remove a government or to plunge in one battle and then go.. but I've come to remind you with your belief in the One God which you keep on repeating in your prayers every day without grasping it. When your people walk on the wings of martyrdom then you will achieve freedom, victory and justice .. And die for God's sake will be victory, and to devote our life for God will be victory.. Now, back to your work and God have mercy on you.."

Waheeb went out, his forehead sweating all over and his eyelashes wet with tears, and Rajaa followed him, her eyes misting and her head bowed down she whispered:

"We are together for God."

"This is the happiest day in my life."

The change which overwhelmed Waheeb was not a sudden one. It came as a result of an exhausting suffering and a lot of thinking, and after he went through many experi-

ences, and the tragedy of sad days burdened his mind and heart, giving him restlessness, and obstinate anxiety..

Waheeb muttered as he dried his tears another time:

"This is the happiest day in my life..

What the man is thinking of can't be rejected by a healthy mind, and is not shunned by a faultless nature."

Chapter 21

David was a young man who was 22 years old. He received the principles of politics through a famous Israeli party, which had some seats in the Kiniset. He memorised a lot from the pages of the Old Testament. He wasn't satisfied of the existence of the Great state of Israel that would extend from the Nile to Euphrates, stretching southward till it would cover great parts of Arabian Peninsula. No, his dream was bigger than that. He believed that the Zionist power must be overall the World.. He had read the Protocols of the Zionist Philosophers and was influenced by much of them. Some of his friend accused him of being an extremist and absorbed in dreams, but he laughed at their weak will and their expectations. He assured them that Zionism, in its control over the economy of many countries of the world, makes its agents have a big influence over the governments and thus it, directs their policy. He repeated over again that the penetration of Zionist hands, and its intellect in the great mass-media in different countries, imposes big challenges for the enemies, and has the power to influence the public opinion in a dangerous way. The Zionist cooperation towards the American elections, and the participation of some of the Zionist scientists in atomic and space researches, leads the "White House" in America to be a doll in their hands. David claimed that there were just few steps for Zionism to reach its great dream to rule the world.

David was watching the on-going events with great interest. A hidden rage blazed in his heart as he was reading the story of the so called Caliph who had madê a stir in the

city, and had been the concern of journalism and news agencies. Due to David's strong relationship with Elie, he was informed by him of a lot of things, in particular Rachel's story with the Caliph. He was blazing with rage and wished that he could take a pistol and empty its bullets in his chest. He hated the man and his principles.

David told Elie one evening:

"If it's true that this man is really Omar, it would be a golden chance to take revenge for our miseries in "Khaybar" and for the people of "Kuraiza" and "Nadeer" and "Kuinikaa.." Those people had been humiliated by the Moslems, long ago."

And when the news of the school girls who went to adopt the Caliph's principles spread out, David was nearly out of his mind and he commented by saying:

"These deceived, corrupted girls are staining the zionist glory and they are lowering their dignity to the bottom, it is inevitable that we should crush them completely."

David believed that Rachel was playing an important role for the General Zionistic Intelligence, but the news about these girls aroused doubts inside him towards her. Elie recognized what David was thinking about, so he said:

"You refuse to believe me David.. Rachel is in love with this mysterious man, she has sided with him completely."

David commented impatiently:

"Our government is behaving stupidly towards this case, they must destroy this man "the lie" before the rush of insane people on him becomes greater.. Let them throw him to hell or accuse him of belonging to Fatah Organization, then they should sentence him to death by shooting bullets at him in a general field so as he would be an example for others."

Elie whispered happily:

"This is what they will do.. but they want first to suck him out.. they still believe that behind him is a wicked conspiracy."

David said highly stirred:

"Have you read his latest journalistic declarations? These declarations have stirred up a great muddle.. Even the Christians' and Jews' heads have been turned by his

words. The words of this man and his extreme influence over the common people, especially the educated, is of the most dangerous kinds of conspiracies.. What are they waiting for?"

David spent days full of impatience, restlessness and anger. His family observed his tension, anxiety and anger. The halls of the administration of passports and nationality, which he was working in, were roaring with his hot discussions and his overwhelming rebel. Even the party and the club and the places of worship witnessed his roaring comments... A lot of his friends started to adopt his opinion fanatically..

One evening, he put on his full clothes, and headed for Rachel's house. They closed the door in his face and apologized for not meeting him because time was not proper. Rachel used to know him and she knew about his friendship with Elie. And she thought: Why not see him? He is not a reporter, may be he is a kind boy who would be attracted towards the light, in spite of what she knows about his political extremism and his fanatic religiousness. May be God will change these emotions and thoughts in a moment of dazzling enlightenment.

She cried out from inside the house:

"Let him enter if you please.. Welcome David."

When they were seated in the humble reception room, David said pale and tense:

"I'm sorry for disturbing you, but is it true what we are reading in the papers and hearing in the streets?"

"What have you heard?"

"His words have deluded you.."

She said musing:

"Truth possesses an extraordinary attractive power which pure metals can't escape."

He muttered in horror:

"You claim to be wise?"

"I'm relating what has happened without any elaboration."

He roared:

"You are the shame of the generation."

She looked up at him, his look stirred up pity, and she said in patience:

"I confess I had some childish schemes in the beginning. But when I knew the man closely and heard his words and grasped them, everythying changed. I didn't yield to the fears but I obeyed my mind and heart. Why does a man delude himself, and ties up his soul and intellect with the chains of passiveness?"

He moved his head nervously, and started to crack up his fingers tensely and said:

"If what you said is truth, then you are a cancer which should be exterminated."

She smiled in a quietness that he didn't expect and she whispered confidently:

"The spirit is not taken except by its Creator. Death doesn't stiffle the light of truth. Its sacred lamp fights on and on because it is immortal."

He said disgustingly:

"After death, you'll be a dirty corpse. What kind of truth you're talking about?"

She said as she started to feel warmed of a rebel inside her:

"The authentic dialogue is not done by cursing, you will not win by your curses."

His blond forehead started to sweat all over, and his looks appeared perplexed and upset. For a time he remained silent, he was burning with roaring emotions and killing impotence. He hasn't been successful in his conversation and hasn't taken the style of gentleness and courtesy. He hasn't come for this.

"I'm sorry Rachel.. you believe strongly in what you are saying. And you are right, I was rude and impolite.. But I'm happy, my violence revealed valuable things."

Rachel whispered as her hidden anger was subdued:

"God has created us free, and He granted us the bless of the mind, and He gave us a healthy nature.. We have to choose. Does it annoy you if a free man chose the way he wants?"

He looked at her charming face, and her eyes that were glistening with truth and insistence, and the strange awe

that accompanied all her doings in every situation, and he said withdrawingly:

"What you talk about is exciting, and worth to be listened to. What happened to me? What a fool I was. I was wrong in my rebel.. It is the truth that I'm saying. But I think that the subject needs more clarification. It is not an easy matter, Rachel."

She shook her head in agreement:

"Yes, to make a decision is a great achievement.. Man is attitude. Do you get me, David?"

He smiled and said assurely:

"Yes, a decisive attitude, It is inevitable.."

Then he turned to say and his smile broadened:

"I think you won't mind seeing me another time. Maybe... who knows? Maybe I would be convinced and go on with you in the same way.. but keep in mind that I am intractable and obstinate."

Her features glowed with happiness and a magic glow overwhelmed her face. Shyness was shown through her gestures and looks, then she said:

"Maybe my information, as a beginner are little, in spite of this, I'm ready to continue the argument. You may go back and read over the Caliph's speech which was published lately in a newspaper.. He discussed religions, politics, art, intellect and science. It is brief, but in fact David, it is miraculous and I may arrange a meeting with the Caliph himself too. He is a simple kind man."

His red ears were pricked up and he said interestingly:

"A wonderful idea.. but it should be preceded by a private meeting between me and you so as I will have enough ideas about the subject." Then he continued as he prepared to stand up:

"Do you mind if we meet there in the outskirts of the city? Westward, there is an old tree and near it there is a small casino."

She thought for a while then said:

"Why doesn't Elie come with you?"

He was stunned, then he said impatiently:
"I don't think he will come.. you know his obstinacy and rebellious nature, besides, I don't want him.."
She said: "It is so.."

* * *

He walked on in the streets with no destination.. as if he was followed by a savage monster; her words were going on and on in his flamed mind.. Is she a Jew the daughter of a Jew? It is impossible.. It is inevitable that there inside her, is a strange vein which corrupted her nature.. and stained her mind and mixed up her soul with devil's breath.. She is a poison plotter, no doubt, or insane.. What a ruin that hit everything in her.. She is beautiful.. I feel she is a victim of an outlaw who wants to take her from us.. David went on to think and think...

Two days after the meeting, all parts of Jerusalem were stunned because of an accident that took place: a horrible, exciting accident.. Newspapers wrote down on its head papers in huge headlines: Rachel was found in a far place in the outskirts of the city, thrown down near an old tree and she was bleeding. She has been stubbed in her belly, breast and face. But she hasn't died... She was in a coma. People were confused in relation to the strange accident.. Someone said: "This is the beginning of the disasters which the stranger will get us to." Another one said: "The crime has been committed by Arab Moslem hands because they think that the Jewish Rachel is a spy deceiving the claimed Caliph and is counting his words, gestures and everything concerning his movements." A third one said: "Her defeated fiancé, Elie, has taken his revenge and avenged his dignity and hurt pride."

One citizen claimed that he saw Rachel, just before the accident, accompanied by a young Arab. He started defining his color, exacting his height and the clothes he was wearing. Furthermore, he claimed that he had heard her saying: "Where are we going to? I am afraid." The school girls in which Rachel held a meeting sometime ago, went out in a big demonstration demanding the search for the

criminal and working seriously in the investigation till the vague things are revealed."

A leading newspaper commentator said: "The one who is primarily responsible for this crime is the so-called Caliph. So, if she dies, then her blood is stripped around his neck." Another commentator said: "Fateh organization is behind this crime for sure, and the mystery will be known sooner or later.." Security men arrested a large number of Arabs, among them Dr. Abd Al-Wahab, Dr. Waheeb and the nurse Rajaa, and a numbers of the attendants and male nurses, and they arrested me too.. Not a Jew was arrested to be investigated except Elie who was set free at once after he had assured them that he had no connection with the crime, and he proved that he was in a specified place to work on a special mission assigned to him by his boss, and witnesses confirmed his words.

Rachel's mother said and tears flowing over her face:

"If my daughter dies, her death will be a great loss."

Her father said sadly:

"If this really happens, then I will sue the government. Even I will sue them from now, because they were neglecants in protecting my daughter.. Rachel has become one of the most famous and dangerous stars of the society. Protecting her is a duty, as Dyan and the Golda Mayer are protected."

Chapter 22

Hatred was eating up his heart and he was roaring as a heaving volcano. He was nearly out of his mind.. Rachel was still alive.. What a relapse had hit his hopes, and destroyed his plan!! He thought of sneaking inside the hospital to end her life before she would regain her consciousness. He started to roam tensely around the building, but the guards sent him away many times and threatened of arresting him if he didn't leave.. Rachel's parents themselves couldn't visit her, so what about strangers? David returned home confused, pale and in his mind glittered an evil thought and inside the narrow room he was wandering with his restless looks, and he muttered: "He is the first one who is responsible for all what happened. This is what was written in some papers and it accords with my point of view. If I ended his life, I would have put an end to this funny tragedy.. Omar.."

The tumult aroused by the crime didn't die down; and the official religious scholar in Jerusalem announced:

"These chaotic riots and the blood that has been spilled unjustly are kinds of riots that God has not allowed to occur, and they aren't accepted according to the schooling of God's Messenger. And the presence of this mysterious personality "Omar" will lead to threatening deterioration and to religious conflicts and foolish fanaticisms which God only knows their limit." He alluded to his previous views and his not being dragged behind the emotions of the innocent people and signed his name at the end of the report.

Dr. Mahmud Al-Anani entered to the Caliph's room sad

and frowning. Then he examined him in apparent confusion and he muttered in a low voice:

"Caliph, things are going worse.. They have arrested Waheeb, Abd Al-Wahab and Rajaa and a great number of people after Rachel's accident."

The Caliph asked in astonishment:

What accident?

The attempt to murder Rachel.. her body has been torn by mad dagger."

Sorrow, mixed with anger was apparent on his noble face and he said:

"There is no power and no strength save in God."

"The range of vision threatens of dangers.."

"What a poor girl.. I know well the stabbing of a dagger .. Abou Luoluaa had done it, pushed by Jews and some hateful men. I suffered great pains. I wonder how is she now?"

"She hasn't crossed the danger stage yet."

The Caliph cried out:

"Who has done it, Mahmud?"

"Unknown.."

"If she dies, then she is a martyr."

"Mahmud said with hesitation:

"Some suspected fingers are pointing at you in being accused.."

"The Caliph cried: "Me?!"

"They are looking for a scapegoat to silent the rebelling, protesting people."

The Caliph said assuredly:

"It won't be easy to deceive people after the events that took place."

"They are covering their wrong claims in the clothes of truth."

The Caliph returned to his silence, then he started to repeat verses from the Koran:

"Remember how the unbelievers plotted against thee, to keep thee in bounds, or slay thee, or get thee out (of thy home), they plot and plan, and God too plans, but God is the best of planners."

The Caliph's sorrow was too great because of what hap-

pened to Rachel, and he thought about the person who was responsible for this accident. Suspicions which were raised against Rachel didn't overstep the stage of doubt, and they were not sufficient to make one of his followers murder her. His men also won't take an act without taking his advice. The Caliph has announced, before that, his view concerning her frankly, and he committed himself to have trust in her and to be confidential about her. His heart received her faith, believing that she was stepping from good to the better. He could sense in her voice the loyalty and honesty and her assimilation in her new life, and her calling for Islam aloud without being afraid, prove her loyalty. Anyone who followed the events could easily understand what Rachel was doing. The Caliph muttered:

"I can't be absolutely certain without a clear proof, my heart tells me that this vicious act is done by a hateful Zionist.. I don't know who he is, but all the signs point out that not a man of ours who can dare to commit such a foolish act. We haven't come to murder people but to spread out virtue and to plant love, and to say our word. We don't hurry things up, for when change takes place inside the minds and emotions of poeple, then by themselves, they will cooperate in raising up the foundation of the pure great structure.."

Mahmud said:

"The enemy is wicked and insolent, Caliph.."

"I know them, but the matter is out of the range of their wickedness and the events will be ahead of them. The murderers will appear sooner or later.. Young men here are hit with the disease of fame and appearances.. The murderer himself doesn't want to be unknown. He wants to become a hero, whom the newspapers will write about, and whose name will be repeated in clubs and schools. This world is fond of scandals and mottos, uncovering what is not shown.."

One investigator came to take the Caliph's statements:

"Your full name.. Your country, age, job.."

"You know."

"Nothing in advance. I'm beginning as if I don't know anything."

The Caliph said:

"Well, Omar Ibn Al-Khattab .. My homeland: Jerusalem. Age: I don't know. And my job! What shall I say? I've gathered the wood and was a shepherd for camels and sheep. I was an envoy between Mecca and the Far World.. And I served under the government of the nation for ten years."

The investigator slowed down, he thought for some time, then he took the pen and started to write and reasked impatiently:

"What do you know about the accident?"

"The information that was published in the newspapers."

"Don't you know the murderer?"

"I don't hide the testimony, God says: "For whoever conceals it, his heart is tainted."

The investigator said:

"In the last meeting between you and Rachel, has not she shown in front of you any fears?"

"She was a courageous girl who feared nothing, in her first life.. and in the second one.."

The investigator darted at him watching glances and said:

"Hasn't anyone of your men threatened her?"

"My men don't know dishonesty. They neither believe in murdering nor killing the innocents."

"Maybe some, thought that she wasn't innocent?"

The Caliph said:

"Maybe."

The investigators shouted:

"You don't say anything valuable."

"Your whole behavior has no sense. Have you come to search for a murderer in the hospital where a patient is lying down?"

"But we are looking for a clue."

"So as to escape through it, and lay the responsibility on the shoulders of an innocent victim."

"You are opposing the guardians of the law."

"And I don't believe in your law."

"This is a crime which the law condemns."

The Caliph stretched over his bed, and he put his palms under his head and said:

"What I've said is enough.. no more talking, so look for another thing to amuse yourself with.."

"We will talk."

"No one will force me. This is my right."

"For sure we will come back to you another time."

The investigator went out, and Dr. Mahmud returned to ask the Caliph about what had happened. They were not aware how the door opened suddenly and a blue eyed blond man jumped inside. He was David.. madness in his eyes and his face was flushed so that blood was going to burst out from it, and a bright dagger in his hand. Dr. Mahmud stood up stunned, unable to move or think. The Caliph looked with steady, firm eyes and he said with a confident, respectful and full voice:

"The same dagger! Eh! You won't do it, you filthy man."

David had shut the door behind him and locked it firmly. Guards were knocking violently from outside, and David moved towards the Caliph's bed revealing his teeth which were dirty because of over-smoking:

"Your age is over, Caliph .. and history won't go backwards. This is our age, it is ours and we'll crush anyone who sneaks through our existence."

The Caliph said keeping up with his courage and calmness:

"There are things common for all ages. Sands may change to rockets, horses may change to tanks, armoured cars, and plane. But the heart of man will go on being filled with love, liberty, brotherhood and pure values. Unification will continue to be the flag of dignity and liberation from all idols and seducers. This is the scent of all ages.

Daggers can't kill the spirit of righteousness in this big world."

David jumped up as a savage tiger and he raised his hand with the dagger to let it fall and be placed in the heart of the Caliph. Dr. Mahmud rushed over, but the Caliph was faster than him and he jumbed up from his bed in astonishing quickness, and he caught David's wrist with a hand like iron, it left him unable to move..

Mahmud shouted: "Leave him to me, Caliph. I'm responsible to give him a lesson.."

Mahmud pulled him to the back after the dagger was droppedfrom him by the Caliph.He darted at his lower jaw a strong blow then he kicked him with his right knee a strong kick on his belly. David swayed, he looked pale and terrified and he fell down as if he was fainting. He was groaning weakly and asking for help.Mahmudwalked to the door and opened it, while he was sweating all over his face. Mahmud said while panting, in shivering tones:

"Take this dog to the police. He has tried to murder the Caliph."

The guards blew up their whistles, and the bells rang in the room and on the phones. Additional forces were called and the employees in the hospital ran over to the place of the accident while Dr. Mahmud bent over the fainted criminal. Then he started to examine him and listen to the beats of his heart, then he injected him with Koramine in order to wake him up.

The Caliph muttered some words from the Koran:

"And God turned back the unbelievers for all their fury: no advantage did they gain; and enough is God for the believers in their fight."

David opened his eyes and looked up to see the guards surrounding him from every side. A great Zionist officer was holding his hand and was telling him to accompany him to the headquarters of the Administration of Security, David looked around. Dazzling lights were flashed by the cameras.. The Caliph was sitting on his bed watching the scene in silence. Mahmud, with his white coat was seen by David from the back. David started to beat his head and pull his hair hysterically and sob and say:

"You are treating me as a murderer. I'm fulfilling a sacred duty. Why don't you let me? the murderer is here (pointing at the Caliph's bed). You won't understand me except when it is too late - Genuises are like this always.. I'm saying it with my mouth full, Israelies: crash this danger before the claimed Caliph's words change to crowds, flags, and fires burning you; your safety and existence. Thus giving over the long strife of generations. And now, do whatever you want with me.."

* * *

Newspapers found a new material to write about. It was inescapable to direct the charge of "Attempted Murder" to David. But a new, clear tune started to appear in the following days, carrying with it the sentiments of compassion and pity with respect to David. One Zionist commentator said:

"David's tragedy carries a dangerous meaning, the meaning of rejection of our young generation to all kinds of legends and supernaturals, the time of which has been over long ago, save in some backward countries as the African and Islamic countries.. The accused should be viewed in a sensible point of view, which understands the nature of the problem, and looks compassionately at the rebellion and violence of that generation, against religious tricks and idiocies which threaten our safety and future after we have sacrificed a lot of money, blood, spiritual and materialist efforts to achieve the top of immortal victory in June 1967.. David is innocent. He is devoted to his age and people. David is the symbol of rejection and rebellion, and he succeeded in expressing the rebellion and revolution of this generation and its expectations.."

But another newspaper issued in Tel Aviv devoted an article on the head of its first page to write without signature:

"David suffers from a mental disease. In his own file in the party, in the school and in the administration of passports, situations and events revealing the symptoms of his disease. For human and medical reasons, security authorities should release him at once, or transform him to a sanitarium of mental diseases."

The same newspaper performed a thorough journalistic report about David's past. This newspaper met his father, mother, brothers, sisters and some of his friends. And they met also some girls who were not ashamed to declare that they had different love affairs with David. All the speeches and declarations were centered on the mental disease which David had suffered from since he was young, because of the wars and disasters that the Zionist movement went through and the fears that resulted. The strange thing was that the newspaper of the party which David belonged to,

took another attitude. That newspaper started to enumerate the encounters of Jews in the Arabian Peninsula at the time of the Messenger and the Caliphs. And it presented the attitudes of dishonesty, treachery and violating contracts and deceit, all were presented as heroisms and sacrifices which were considered as a bright phase in the history of the Jewish religion. It went on to attack Omar's historical attitude and the policy of the early Moslems. It warned the people of the bad future and the repetition of Khybar events and those of Kuraiza and other events.. if things were not curbed and the poisons of the new riot were to spread.

And in a clear square the newspaper published the news of selecting a great and known lawyer to defend the devoted patrioritic, and ideological hero: David Hayim. The journal announced that it had put for the service of these lawyers, all kinds of incidents and documents, and it confirmed that the case was not that of "Attempted Murder" as the deceived investigators had presented it, but that of "Self-defence" and for the safety of the homeland. It is also inevitable that the trial should be a historical one in every sense of the word so that the forthcoming Islamic hatred would be exposed - as it claimed - against Judaism and Jews.

* * *

No one could imagine that Rachel had regained her consciousness, and could step over the stage of danger safely. But she didn't give any statements about the man who attacked her. The security authorities were furious and perplexed for her rejection to reveal the details of the matter. The people were no less perplexed and astonished, but she confirmed that I, Dr. Abd Al-Wahab and Waheeb and Rajaa were innocent. She denied all the rumors which spread out by prejudiced persons against the Caliph. So the authorities found it inescapable to release all the accused people hoping that Rachel would change her attitude and confess what had happened.

* * *

One evening the Caliph said :

"I'm the prisoner of this hospital .. What do the Israelies intend for keeping me here?"

Dr. Waheeb said:

"You will stay till they take a final decision with respect to you.. they don't plan good.. this is my belief."

Dr. Abd Al-Wahab said:

"I know that the jail is for solitude, worship, and meditation but it is inevitable that you go out to people.."

Rajaa whispered in a low voice:

"We must try to get ahead of what they are thinking of. There is no hope in Zionists. So, let us arrange a plan to escape from here before something that is not approved happens."

I replied at once:

"This is the only correct opinion."

As for the Israelies, they used to say: "The Caliph's safety is our responsibility, and the current of violent enmity against him, be it from Moslems, Christians or Jews, forces us to protect his life. And there is no more safe or clean place than the Hospital of Jerusalem."

And in her surrounded bed, Rachel said in a sobbing weak voice.:

"I wish to see the Caliph.. I'm afraid to die before seeing him."

A cunning journalist said:

"What a marvelous idea, for the Caliph to come leading a big procession, under the flashes of the cameras surrounded by a line of policemen, and enters the Israeli hospital to meet the girl who believed in him and loved him.. What a meeting it would be! It is a fertile atmosphere for journalism, poets, novelists and delightful chatters."

The authorities didn't mind to execute Rachel's desire, but the Caliph smiled tenderly and calmly, then he said:

"Lord restores her health.. Her intention is good.. but the wicked people want to take advantage of the situation, to amuse themselves and play, and lots of sarcasm would be offered to the people. Spirits, men, are recruited soldiers, as the Messenger says, the spirits that are acquainted will meet in harmony, and those who alienate will

differ.. Neither ties and walls nor spears will stand in the way of the meeting of spirits. Rachel has enough supply that is sufficient to plunge in the seas of pains, lonelines and suffering. She even has enough of sweet water to satisfy her thirst in her long journey. So disperse and go towards your destination where you intend to go."

Chapter 23

Dr. Rajaa was absorbed with the great meanings which the Caliph elaborated. She felt she was born again. Now she started to talk and consider what she was discussing. She moved and worked consciously.. the most important thing was that she was reflecting. She realized that thinking is the spirit of life. The issues which the words of the Caliph had imposed were many: God.. Man.. Islam.. Relation between man and man; between the Creator of the universe and man in the universe; between religion and science; and that age and what was going on of conflicting vlaues, thoughts and emotions. It was not easy, because it was not just a passing sentimental feelings. Yet it was taking a position, a basic position on which stands reponsibilities and views. Rajaa found herself viewing things much differently than before: with respect to her clothes, food, sleep and awakeness and her relations with her colleagues, males or females, and her family ties... Then the important thing which is: her obligation to spread the principles and thoughts that she believed in, over people, especially among women of her own sex. She was much active and always working and her role was great. Even though journalism didn't make of her a material for excitement; yet, in spite of her quietness, her role was more important than Rachel's role, the girl whose name was mentioned by everyone.

Rajaa's relationship with Dr. Waheeb had changed. Their relationship, in the past was a mixture of sweet whispers, adoring looks, long talks on the phone, going out at night to the movies, picnics to different beautiful places, and dreams about the future and the happy house and the

long-waited for children in the unknown world. About the furniture of the bed room, reception room and living-room; the honeymoon and the latest fashions in clothes, hair styles, and dyes, and a few desparate words about the war, Israel and the refugees; about the ones who died, and those who were waiting for their turn... That was their past relationship. Waheeb sometimes talked to her about the strife of woman in the procession of the proletariat revolution, and the bloody extermination of the rotten exploitation, and the heroism rebels in Vietnam and the educational revolution in China. He told her also about the new leading imperialism in America which consisted of men of finance and industry. If he would mention all this to her, she used to appear impatient and bored, she used to nod with no interest. She used to try to go back with him to the simple sweet words about life, love, future, and the happy home... But today, Rajaa had become something completely different. Her face was overwhelmed with a determined serious and mysterious gloom, her clothes were wide and decent. The looks were pure and intent; the conversations were concentrated on the Caliph and his instructions. Waheeb was sharing her all these things happily as if they were studying lessons that determine their future and life. Then they planned the way to direct people towards this old and new thinking. They were prepared to all kinds of suffering, dangers, and hardships which might come in their way. All this didn't extinguish the pure love which stirred up warmth in their bosoms, and added to their world a serene beauty. And Rajaa muttered:

"Whenever I remember the past I feel a great shame."

Waheeb smiled and said:

"On the contrary, I don't feel ashamed at all, of all what had happened before. The past was an interesting experience in spite of its deviations and confusions."

"How?"

"Because if there were no such experience, and what it aroused in my mind of a violent conflict and comparisons, I wouldn't have been able to take this new attitude".

Rajaa said: "Why weren't our days in the beginning as the days were are living now?

Waheeb mused for a while and said:

"Omar in pre-Islamic times was obstinate and violent. It was said that he was one of the hardest enemies of the Messenger before he converted to Islam. Furthermore, he fought against some earlier Moslems and tortured and mocked them bitterly. He went out of this interesting experience having much more immunity, supported with experience and knowledge.. He had become an example followed in his faith, loyalty and devotion.. Ah! He had hit his sister till she bled when he saw her reading secretly verses from the Koran. Then he snatched the paper in rage, and he read the verses to see what was in there. The words brought up astonishment in his mind and spread security in his heart. His body trembled at these words, they shook him deeply, his muscles slacked and his face was relaxed.. These are not the words of man. His eyes flodded with tears, then he repeated: these are not the words of man. He bowed his head in sorrow and hurried to the Messenger and he believed.. He was the one who took up his sword to kill Mohammad and to wipe out the Divine Light, in the name of order and to avoid conflicts. But Omar changed, in an immortal moment, he found the order as God's law and that disaster is to believe in other than Allah. The shocking experience creates a new man where he won't be defuted by greed or ruined by apostasy."

Rajaa was listening to him with interest. He was speaking with a tone full of honesty. Despite this, she kept on dreaming of the ideal image: the image of the pure heart that is opened for the light of the truth, and which accepts faith with no insistence or foolishness. And she alluded this meaning to Waheeb who said:

"This is the Prophet.. The Divine Truth is pouring in his heart with no hesitation, putting forth in his soul virtues; and from his words light is emitted in every direction.. It is a pure divine choice.. God be praised, He can choose whoever He wants.."

They recalled what was going on in these days, especially Rachel's accident and David's attempt to kill the Caliph and the attitude of Dr.Mahmudfor whom the accident was the spark which enlightened his mind and feelings, and so

he believed. Rajaa smiled and said: "Isn't it strange in your being before Mahmud in following the truth, Waheeb." Waheeb repeated of what Mahmud was known for his love for extreme patience, and for revising everything more than once even in the obvious morbid cases. He wouldn't admit its diagnosis except after many examinations. This behavior used to bother the technicians of the X-ray machine and the ones working in the labs of blood tests and excretions, and the microscope carriers.. He was patient and accurate to the degree that annoys. That was why he missed more than a chance to marry. But he didn't regret this at all.. Even during the war, he could escape before the occupation of the city, but he was busy in examining a special sickly case where he wanted to reach a decision. And when the hospital was full of the wounded, he was busy working. He was not aware till the Zionist forces surrounded the hospital and entered to it.

Rajaa was silent for a while, then she said:

"My Dad, God have mercy on him, used to advise us always not to leave our land, however the circumstances were. This is our land and on it we live and die. My father didn't forget at all that exhausting, sad trip in the year 1948 when he was carrying the food on one shoulder and a child on the other, going on passing through the fields of death, leaving behind him Yafa. He used to say that if one inch of our land remained , I would have stayed in it. Who knows? The small seed may be uncovered by the earth and would come out as a big tree, its branches raising up towards the sky.. this is what he used to say.. The tragedy was enveloping my life.. In fact, I wasn't, me being a Moslem, thinking seriously of Islam. I used to know superficial matters concerning Hell, Heaven and the history of the great warriors. The history of the Messenger was likened to my imagination to a beautiful poem having a musical rhythm, capturing the hearts. But I neither grasped the meaning of this poem nor did I go deep in understanding it. I didn't learn in school anything valuable about it. And I didn't have a book that I could understand well. But the Caliph's words were simple, amazing, full of wonder and effect. I've known well the palce of truth, goodness and the source of immortal beauty.

I couldn't understand Islam before as explained by professionals.. or it might be that I didn't try to understand."

Waheeb started to think in a loud voice: "The important decisive factor is not to own a lot or a little of information. Abu Sufyan, in his pre-Islamic stage, knew a lot of wisdom and a lot of the sciences of his age. While Bilal was a simple poor slave working by the hands and barely finding time for rest. Bilal believed and Abu Sufyan was irreligious. Oh! When I believed in the "dictatorship of the class" and the unity of the working class in the world, I used to say with others: "We don't oppose the working class, in the Zionist state. For they are mistreated victims as we are. They are a part of the whole; of the working laborers of the world". My old father laughed then and said: "You are fooled. The working class in the Zionist state are those who are carrying arms and occupying Golan and Sinai. They are the ones who established Israel from the beginning, planting in our land vagrancy, suffering and humiliation. Blasphemy is one party, there are faithful workers and unfaithful ones. But your divisions, my son, are borrowed and they are far from being true. Virtue, Waheeb, does not come up from a class, and righteousness is not outside of a certain class. They are individualistic qualities that might fill the heart of a worker or a king or a soldier. It might flourish under the ceiling of a humble cottage, or around a lofty palace. Justice is founded neither by richness or poverty, nor by a slave or a master. Justice springs from the heart of the believer.." This's what my father used to say, and I ridiculed him between me and myself accusing him of stiffness and backwardness. Oh.. in order the happy society be founded, the good individual and the just governor should be founded. There is not any kind of holiness that belongs to a certain class or individual. Holiness is for the principles which people have to follow.."

Waheeb sighed in delight and said:

"I believe in God."

* * *

Rachel's accident remained a puzzle which no one could solve except the murderer and the attacked person. But David wouldn't speak up, and Rachel refused to tell the

truth. The Caliph's attendants started with the necessary investigations in order to understand what was behind the accident, and they went towards every direction trying to gather news, whispers and guessings. As for Elie, he was nearly going mad, for he, in spite of his rage towards Rachel's behaviour and his despising her ideas; yet he was burning out of anger. He wanted to know the murderer to take his revenge on him. Elie believed firmly that the doer was inevitably one of the Caliph's followers. It might be that the Caliph himself was the one who set up this murder to get rid of the girl who was surrounded by suspicions and whom the Moslems thought was an obvious Israeli plot, and this didn't need so much smartness. Besides, what was written about Rachel in the papers, especially her love affair and the lies that the security authorities had put down; all these things had angered the Caliph against Rachel. That's what Elie believed, even though the Caliph pretended that he was pleased with her. And what confirmed this belief to Elie, was that Rachel was still resorting to silence. Elie thought that the reason behind this was that she didn't want to tell about her companions who were the followers of the Caliph, because this would have been a great disappointment to her and a break down to her plans, and people's mockery would follow her. Rachel considered it as a matter of dignity and pride. Besides, she was still in love with the mysterious man and was yearning for him..."

But Dr. Mahmud had another quite strange opinion. He remembered that David, while attempting to attack the Caliph was repeating madly:

"It is impossible for me to fail twice."

Dr. Mahmud didn't remember this sentence except after some time passed, and started to try to understand its meaning, he thought that David might have thought of assassinating the Caliph once before and had failed. Suddenly a strange idea occurred to his mind: "Why can't David be the doer in Rachel's accident too?" He remembered that Rachel's rejection to confess had a good reason. For if David, the hateful and fanatic man was the criminal in Rachel's accident, why had she to cover up for him?

Mahmud decided to go to the Israeli Hospital in New

Jerusalem despite the strict guardianship, by the help of one of his old friends. He entered, and it was not easy, for he exerted an abnormal effort till he was able to reach her. And when he was alone with her, he pretended examining her to give his opinion. He whispered:

"Why are you covering up for him?"

She said calmly in a whisper:

"Who?"

He gave her a steady, unshivering looks and said:

"David"

Her face looked pale and her heart was pounding violently, her eyelashes were wet with tears and she started to sit but failed, she cried out in a weak voice:

"How did you know?"

"It doesn't matter. Your covering up for him is baffling. Is it because he is Elie's friend?"

She said after she controlled her nerves:

"Does everybody know? What about the Caliph?"

"You must clear up this thing or we'll fall in a worse trouble.. Speak up.. Time doesn't allow for talking nonsense."

She held his white coat obstinately and said: "I was afraid that the Caliph would be hurt."

"How?"

"If David is condemned, then his party will lead up a revolution that God only knows where it would lead to. Elie might face him and take revenge and a riot will break out in the rotten Israeli society, which would lead to disasters. No one will pay but the Caliph. I know them."

She swallowed and rested for some moments, then she proceeded to say:

"Promise me that you'll not uncover the matter, for the sake of the Caliph , even for the sake of all of us."

"But to leave David, will lead to other disasters. He has nearly killed the Caliph as you know."

"The Caliph is saved, thank God.. Wait.. This is not the time to reveal what had happened."

Mahmud bowed his head down in confusion and left.. but he felt great happiness.

After two days, David was set free by a paid guarantee...

Chapter 24

All the Caliph's followers decided to set up a plan to let him escape through the borders to the nearest Arab country. There, they figured out, he would find security and liberty and the suitable atmosphere for his work. He would also, be saved from the Zionist wickedness and would be free from the prison wall in which they were surrounding him. The Caliph protested in the beginning and said: "My sons: My person isn't important. If I were prisoned or dead, it wouldn't matter, for these things happen many times to the bearers of principles. What is important is to say forth the words, that these words should live in the mind and emotions of people, and that those people should transmit them to the others. Not one tyrant could, over the eras of history, prison words, because they're like the spirits wandering in the horizon. Words don't bleed, aren't tortured or burried under the sand. It is life that is immortal, and they keep on turning and turning back again. Omar is not important; but the words that Omar has uttered are important, and you know those words. Mohammad immigrated to 'Yathreb', and we were with him. But his words were repeated all over Mecca, breaking through doors and windows, and were echoed back in the valleys, and on the tops of the mountains. These words were following people day and night, whispering these words sometimes, they were stronger because they believed in them, because they were, strong honest words that contained neither falseness nor hypocrisy, because they were the words of the Great God. Well... Let's go to another country leaving words doing their duty here. Words are like a living human

being that might grow up, breed, and jam the road.. You can live among them, but be aware. I don't mean mere words; for words alone are useless. They should be carried by pure intellect, and a faithful heart which doesn't fear but God. They should be translated into behaviour, to a distinguished life.. This is better and stronger. I know that your age is the age of power; but keep in mind my sons, that the heart of a believer, his courageous, free intellect, and his pure soul will give you unsurpassable strength. Power isn't made up of iron and fire alone.. These two are just materialist phenomena. There is the spiritual power.. You'll need iron and fire - no doubt - as your Prophet had needed them before. The materialist power by itself is rubbish and will end.. It may be possessed by many people. I'm not a dreamer or an illusive person. And I don't inspire my words from straying towards imagination and hallucination. The evidence is in my hands.. In this way, your Prophet was victorious. Remember 'Badr', 'Uhud' 'Al-Khandak' and 'Hunain'. For every battle of these, there was a special feature.. And we've won. Don't say as the conceited people say: This is an age which has passed and finished.. It's not true. Where there are principles represented in faithful men who don't fear but God alone, then there is victory and the sun of dignity and justice shines. People then would be happy and the faithful would be delighted at the victory of God. Ah.. My beloved, the Messenger of God died and Moslems were thousands. Look, today, at the whole world: Millions of people are worshipping God, following his call: "Mohammad is no more than an Apostle: many were the Apostles that passed away before him. If he died or were slain, will ye then turn back on your heels? If any did turn back on his heels, not the least? harm will he do to God."

* * *

While we were arranging for the runaway, we were informed that the damned David, after he was released, started to gather around him some of the fanatic youngmen of the party to set up conspiracies to destroy the "Allies of

Omar Group" and everyone who called for his principles. In reality, that thing caused us a lot of annoyance, for we weren't prepared yet, and it wasn't for our benefit, to face him at once. Silence, on the other side, meant giving up and it harmed us. There was no other means but to contact Rachel and convince her to say aloud what was hidden and to talk about the sinful assault of David on her; maybe they would arrest him, thus putting an obstacle against his plot, even if for a while. But Rachel insisted on her previous attitude. She was strongly convinced that her confession would lead to many troubles that would threaten both the Caliph and us. We meant to tell her that there would be no reason to worry about the Caliph because he would leave Jerusalem soon. But some of our brothers, insisted on keeping the "escape" as a secret which shouldn't be revealed to anyone; even there was no reason to tell Rachel about it in spite of trusting her.

The events overwhelmed us in a harsh, painful way: An unknown person placed explosives in Dr. Abd Al-Wahab Al-Saadawi's house. The bomb exploded just before dawn on a black night; which there was no moonlight. The small house where Abd Al-Wahab, his mother and young brother lived in, was destroyed. The three died.. Dr. Abd Al-Wahab died.

His corpse was laid out in the same Arab Hospital, covered with white clothes having red spots. The pure body ceased to live.. it was dead. Everything in the sad city was going on in its way: the cars, tanks, check points, sellers, newspapers, radio songs, and the roaring planes in the prisoned horizon.

We were stunned.. we were moving in the hospital and in the streets as roving ghosts. And when Abd Al-Wahab died, the Caliph's eyes glistened with tears and tears were poured over his white beard. He started to say in a voice mingled with crying: "The eye is wet with tears; the heart is deeply moved; Our sorrow is great for his departure. It is for men like him that people should cry." Dr. Mahmud cried out, his eyes being red: "The time of sacrifices has come let's welcome death." Waheeb answered him vehemently: "It's the time of revenge.. 'In the law of Equality

there is (saving of) life to You'." Rajaa said while tears were soaking her eyes:

"Let me go to meet the killer and I'll burn him and his house.."

The Caliph said in an amazing calmness after he dried up his tears: "God bless strangers.. God bless martyrs.. Everyday, a lot of martyrs fall down on your land, you who are the sons of the heroic land, Abd Al-Wahab didn't fall down alone.. The one who dies defending his honor is a martyr; and the one who dies in the battle of the most sublime strife is a martyr. And the one who dies to defend himself and his money is a martyr. The punishment should be for the sake of those millions who are tortured, and who are smeared with their blood, misery and humiliation. They're the brothers of Abd Al-Wahab."

* * *

The murder occurred without being pointed at even in one word in the newspapers. The murder was recorded against "an unknown person." The Zionistist security men whispered and said: "It is inevitable that the murder was set by one of the leftist, fidayeen fronts. For it is known that Abd-Al-Wahab was inclined towards the Right wing. The reports that we have about his life and political opinions and devotion confirm this. Or it might be that one of the Right fidayeen fronts, has doubted the behaviour of Abd Al-Wahab and they believed that he was participating with Rachel as a hidden Israeli spy."

They were laughing as they wrote down these strange interpretations; and this thing aroused suspicions. Who knows, for it might be that they were responsible for that murder, or it might be that they knew about it and they pretended to be dumb so that the Caliph's followers would be hit badly.

We were surprised to see prominent headlines in the newspapers saying: "Arresting of 'David Hayim Benhas' another time."

"Rachel tells a strange story and David denies the incident and accuses her of madness."

To say the truth, the news aroused a lot of tumult. Elie was enraged and attempted to shoot at his friend David while he was in the hands of the policemen. But he couldn't achieve his aim. Rachel's family was enraged also and they accused the religious party to whom David belonged, of arranging a conspiracy to ruin Rachel's life and future after she has become more famous than the daughter of Dayan and Ben Goryon. There was much controversy in the society of both old and New Jerusalem. It was necessary to behave quickly. The plan that was arranged by deceased Abd Al-Wahab Al-Saadawi, aimed at putting some sleeping draughts which had a great effect in a kind of drink that the Zionist guards used to drink. The second step was to put the Caliph in an ambulance car, having the Israelite sign. In the hospital, there used to be one like this and it was necessary that this car should be driven by one of the loyal companions who should know how to speak Hebrew well and he was to wear an Israeli suit. The car was to pass through side roads which were isolated somehow. Arms shouldn't be used except when it was so necessary and used very carefully. It was inevitable that precautions should be considered so that it would be possible to carry the Caliph to another car when necessary. In truth, 'Fateh men' had offered us a great help in that matter.

The plan went on successfully in such a way that we didn't expect. We didn't face any embarrassing situation which would have obliged us to use force. When we reached a secure area covered with hills and valleys, we left the car under some wild bushes which hid it. We set forth across the canyons and the dawn didn't break out yet. After a long walk, we sat in a safe place to have a rest and to take a few bites of food, and some gulps of water. The Caliph was saying: "My sons, matters in this nation won't go right except when it goes back to the start and look how its ancestors set everything right. Don't think that you've left behind your troubles in your occupied land in which the Zionists are whoring there. No.. no.. troubles are everywhere. The whole world is burdened by a terrible nightmare of anxiety, restlessness and perplexity even the victorious ones. It is like camels living in the desert being killed

by thirst, and they're overloaded with water. The Jews wanted to destroy us in a wicked way, like the greedy starved person who eats slowly and with pleasure to reach the stage of ultimate satisfaction. They used to adorn their wickedness.

But, how can you know? You may suffer another kind of hardship and misery in the new land. My sons, these aren't the last words, and at the same time they're not the first ones.For a long time, these words are repeated all over the world. Oh..One day, I wrote to our Wali Mousa Al-Ashaari telling him: "Righteousness is ancient, and to go back to what is right is better than being immersed in wrong-doing. Avoid anxiety, boredom, and hurting people." Yes my sons, righteousness is ancient, and suffering is ancient for suffering is the companion of right; and virtues have only won due to suffering. This is not the end of the road.. It's a long road equalled to the length of the earth. It started long ago, and the caravan goes on travelling in spite of the hunger, pain, thirst and sacrifices. What God has ordained will be ... Everything is destined and God's ordainment is His Law and it is just."

* * *

We, then, dozed off for we couldn't resist sleepiness. After a while, I don't know if it was short or long, I woke up, and started to look right and left and then I screamed in horror: "The Caliph! Where's the Caliph?" The brothers woke up from their sleep terrified, astonished: Dr. Mahmud , Dr. Waheeb, Rajaa, the driver and other men. We started to run here and there. We climbed up mountains; we sloped down long the surfaces; we roamed up in the valleys calling, calling; and calling out in yearning voices mingled with crying: "Commander of the Faithful, the Caliph of the Messenger of God, Omar Ben Al-Khattab, where are you?"

Nothing was returned back to us but the sad echo mixed up with the throbs of groaning. Dawn broke out, silent, gloomy on our tired, lost procession. Some Israeli helicopters hovered above us like a flock of black crows. We were

watching them carelessly. Then they landed near us and Zionists surrounded us with their weapons and then they led us to the prison. We were walking as if in a dream barely believing what was going on. The Zionist newspapers wrote down in a tone full of rage and hate: "The escape of the mysterious Arab spy."

"Rachel is hit by a nervous break down after hearing the news."

"Arabs are demonstrating in the Old City."

"Investigation is going on with the ones who set up the accident."

"Unconfirmed news say that the 'claimed Caliph' has been seen inside one of the Commandos camps in the Eastern side." We went back to the prison again to suffer from ugly sorts of torture, in order to direct them to the place where the Caliph went. I said to the interrogators: "He is everywhere; he is not just a mere body; he is an intellect and a doctrine.. He is faith. It's impossible for you to arrest him. If you want, arrest every man who has a heart which believes. They're him and he is them. I swear I don't know a particular place he has gone to. If I know that his 'Person' is in any place on this earth, I would fly to him. He is the resurrector of my soul and life. He is the inspiror of my mind. His words are my existence, but I'm sure that he'll come back to appear again."

The interrogators cried out earnestly: "When?" I said: "That is what he has told me secretly. He used to love me.. When will he come? Where? I don't know. I wish I know; but I'll live on the hope of meeting him and I'll find him. He doesn't lie. He is a beam of the light of prophecy. Can you kill the beam? Impossible, and when he'll come back again, I won't sleep. I'll stay awake guarding him with my soul, eye and blood. I'll cling to the hem of his pure clothes and follow him on any road he walks on. You, the people of demons and satans: Haven't I told you that he's my existence? A lot of people die, but they are alive."

Epilogue

The senoir security officer said to his attendants: "Rachel is a vicious germ in our Israeli society. She'll cause us a lot of trouble. We can get rid of her only through death; yes, death! Why are you looking at me like this? This is the opinion of the governing military institution: There is no time for riots and legends. These Eastern Jews are low. Listen to me carefully: The thing won't arouse the least astonishment or suspicion, for she's badly wounded, her health has deteriorated and she's dead. That's what we'll announce and everyone will believe us. We've taken the necessary procedures to do this; the meeting is over."

The same evening, Rachel was buried, Elie committed suicide in his bedroom. An order was issued to release David because there were no witnesses for the accident, and because Rahel was in such an unhealthy state which didn't permit any confidence in what she had said; and this was confirmed in the report of the specialized doctors.

As for me, Rajaa, Waheeb and Mahmud Al-Anani, we were sentenced for five years in one of the military courts, for our participation, as they claimed, in a dangerous spying net led by a commandos Sheikh who is thought to be one of the spiritual leaders. It was strange that tens of books, poems and plays were published discussing Rachel. All authors assured that she was the sacrifying loyal Israeli girl, who had protected her people from eminent external dangers. The time hadn't come yet, to uncover the secrets connected with this case. And one of the colonies, which was supposed to be built on the "Golan Heights" was named after her.

Her parents, and their relatives, started to create, out of pure imagination, a lot of stories alleging them falsely to Rachel. They were paid for this and the silvery tears were moving in their eyes. This was in addition to the reward that the government had paid to her family.

Inside that terrible prison, I was holding my mattock limply and saying: "Waheeb, to spend five years here is an ugly thing."

Waheeb's looks went far away and he said: "But the Caliph said that words can't be prisoned by anyone. They are hovering now everywhere, wakening the sleep up, and stirring the revolution up in the hearts of the wronged people. It is bothering the carriers of whips and rifles and no one can be victorious except when backed by God."

Then a colloquial song was heard one evening, it was sung by an Arab fisherman who was arrested and put in the jail. He was singing that song in deep emotion and touching voice:

"The love of Hassan and Hussain is living inside me and the love for the Prophet lies deep inside my heart,

How I wish to visit you my Prophet and sit there silently beside you,

and to see the pigeons dwelling near your tomb, oh how I wish it."

Dr. Mahmud Al-Anani muttered:

"O.. A morning will be born out the claws of darkness; and in the heart of the believer will be immortal pleasures in spite of the suffering.. how wonderful the journey is."